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ABSTRACT

A discussion of the loss and maintenance of second language skills beyond the formal education process provides information about skill loss and a variety of strategies and suggestions for language skill maintenance. The book begins with an overview of the subject of language loss and maintenance (Jean Berko Gleason and Barbara Alexander Pan), discussing personal factors that seem to make a difference in language study, cultural influences, and the relationship between the kind of language instruction received and the likelihood of losing the language. Subsequent chapters focus on different efforts to help prevent the loss of a foreign language. These include personal learning strategies (Rebecca Oxford and David Crookall), self-instructional resources such as cassettes and other learning resources (John Means), the use of computers to maintain language skills (Frank Otto), study and travel abroad (Helene Zimmer-Loew), and the community as a cultural learning resource (Frederick L. Jenks). References, additional resources, and useful addresses are included. (MSE)

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Jean Berko Gleason, Editor

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YOU *CAN* TAKE IT WITH YOU

HELPING STUDENTS MAINTAIN FOREIGN LANGUAGE SKILLS BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

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Language in Education:
Theory and Practice

YOU CAN TAKE IT with YOU: HELPING STUDENTS MAINTAIN FOREIGN LANGUAGE SKILLS BEYOND the CLASSROOM

Jean Berko Gleason, Editor

A publication of CAL Center for Applied Linguistics

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Foreword

Learning a foreign language takes hard work and months or years of study or immersion in another culture. All too often, despite learners' best resolutions, command of the second language slips away once lessons are over, or once they return to their home community. Such loss of language is not inevitable, and there are many different ways of ensuring that You CAN Take It with You. This book offers some ways of holding onto hard-won foreign language skills; it is aimed at teachers, students, and everyone else with more than one language who wants to maintain language skills.

There is no simple solution to the problem of language loss, no one sure way to maintain a language. Offered here is current knowledge relating to the variety of approaches that are available. Not all of the methods or suggestions will be available to all readers: Obviously, not everyone lives in a university community, for example, in which university-level continuing education courses are available; not everyone lives in a big city with a large Hispanic or Chinese population; nor, alas, can everyone take a trip abroad to help maintain language skills. But there is something here for everyone: basic information about language skill loss, and an array of strategies and suggestions for language skill maintenance.

The book begins with a general overview of the subject of language loss and maintenance. This chapter discusses the kinds of personal factors that seem to make a difference in language study, as well as cultural influences and the relation between the kind of language instruction one has received and the likelihood of losing the language. Five chapters then follow, each concentrating on one kind of effort that will help prevent the loss of a foreign language: personal strategies that one can use; self-instructional resources such as language cassettes; computer approaches to maintaining language skills; study and travel abroad; and community resources. Some of the suggestions may seem rather self-evident, but others are tricks of the trade, generally known only by linguistic researchers and expert language learners who have had experience with many languages.

With the aid of this book, anyone who wants to maintain language skills can develop a plan uniquely suited to his or her own interests, learning styles, and circumstances.

--Jean Berko Gleason, Boston University

Language in Education: Theory and Practice

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Gina Doggett, Editor, Language in Education

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I

Maintaining Foreign Language Skills

by Jean Berko Gleason and
Barbara Alexander Pan, Boston University

Learning a language is not like learning to ride a bicycle. Someone who learns to ride a bicycle well at a young age can maintain the skills involved, even without practice, for many years. All the person usually needs to do to get going again is to get out the old bicycle and take a few practice turns around the block. The skills will be readily retrieved, including the sense of balance and the ability to brake and steer cleanly around obstacles. By contrast, rusty language skills are usually not so easy to retrieve. In fact, lack of use may cause language skills to disappear entirely.

Human beings, especially young people, have a remarkable ability to learn language. Every child who is neurologically intact and who grows up in a given language community learns the language without unusual effort. Because humans have a special inborn capacity to acquire language, and special parts of the brain devoted to this capacity, language learning under normal conditions is practically impossible to suppress. Once learned, language is usually a tenacious acquisition, growing more complex over the lifespan. Vocabulary increases, along with the ability to engage in varied kinds of discourse; for instance, a young adult entering a new occupation will typically learn an entire new vocabulary peculiar to the new workplace. Everyone learns new words and expressions that characterize a changing world--such as *megabytes* and *lasers*--and shifting meanings of old words, such as *cool* and *program*. Although an individual's mastery of a language usually grows stronger over time, in some cases it actually becomes weaker and may even disappear.

One type of situation in which the attrition of language skills may occur is when the individual suffers some type of neurological damage. A head wound or a stroke or other source of brain damage may affect the special brain structures devoted to language, and a particular pattern of language loss may occur. Aphasia or brain damage may lead to complete loss, or to a medical syndrome in which the individual may be unable to produce grammatically correct sentences, or may be unable to retrieve specific words. It sometimes happens that a person who was fluent in two languages loses one entirely overnight as the result of a cardiovascular stroke.

The most common kind of language loss, however, is not caused by anything so dramatic as a medical crisis. Although language requires intact neurological underpinnings, it is also a socially based skill, and in the absence of a linguistically appropriate social environment, language disappears just as surely as if the individual had suffered physical damage. Such loss is particularly likely if the speaker of a language is surrounded by speakers of another competing language that is more useful socially. Speakers of a language who move to another country where a different language is spoken may lose their first language entirely. And students who learn a second language in school tend to lose it even after many years of study, unless they make special efforts at language skill maintenance. The personal investment in learning a language that students make is so great, and so many speakers of second languages want to maintain them, that it is important to find ways to prevent this loss of language skill.

Learning a second language is, for some students, a refreshing and challenging experience. They learn easily, and appear to have a special talent for acquiring language. For others, language study is perplexing and difficult. Most people fall somewhere between these two extremes. Once a second language has been acquired, further differences seem to arise among speakers. Some are able to maintain their second language skills, while others have the distressing experience of rather quickly losing most or all of what they once knew. In the United States alone, millions of individuals who have studied a second language in high school or college for several years lose the ability to hold the most rudimentary conversation not long after graduation. And millions of individuals who as children or young people were monolingual speakers of other languages have become monolingual speakers of English in the United States, unable to speak what was their mother tongue.

Language acquisition and maintenance depend on a number of factors. These include personal factors, relating to the characteristics of the speaker; cultural factors, relating to the status and usefulness of the language in a particular society; and instructional factors, relating to the way in which the language was acquired in the first place.

Personal Factors

Basic Language Ability

Individual differences occur along many dimensions. The ability to learn language (the first or a second or third) is one of these dimensions, and any program of language instruction must take into account the varying degrees of native ability to be found in any classroom. Infants acquiring a first language have been observed to acquire the structures of that language in a fairly uniform order; but the rate at which learning takes place can vary greatly from child to child. Brown and his colleagues, for instance (1973), studied a number of children acquiring English as a first language and demonstrated that children learning English appear to acquire forms such as plurals, past tenses, and articles in approximately the same order, but not at the same ages. It is impossible, for instance, to characterize the speech of a 2-year-old: Some children by their second birthdays are able to produce complex sentences, such as the following question by a 2-year-old who noticed some finger marks on a door frame: "Mommy, when I was a little girl, did I put my finger on the door?" Other equally intelligent children of the same age may produce only very simple sentences composed of two or three content words. Children who are advanced in language acquisition tend to become "verbal" adults.

Language ability or aptitude is often cited as the factor that explains differences in students' ability to acquire and maintain a second language learned in the classroom, and it also appears to account for much of the difference that can be seen in the proficiency that is acquired in informal settings. Aptitude in these informal settings can be measured only roughly. In a study of adult Puerto Ricans now living in the United States, for instance, Cancino and Hakuta (1981; cited in Hakuta, 1986) found that the number of years of prior schooling their 57 subjects had was related to how well they acquired English.

In more formal classroom settings, it is possible to measure students' language aptitude and predict how well a student will learn a foreign language. Perhaps the best known test of language learning ability is the Modern Language Aptitude Test or MLAT (Carroll & Sapon, 1958). This test measures a number of abilities such as rote memory, the ability to code the sounds of the language, and the ability to recognize different grammatical structures. Students who do well on the

MLAT also do well in foreign language study, and the test has been shown to be a reliable predictor of the grades that high school and college students will attain (Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Jakobovits, 1970; Oller & Perkins, 1980). Unfortunately, no test is available that can predict how well a student will maintain the language after study has ceased; the development of such a measure is the goal of much current research in the emerging field of language attrition study (Lambert & Moore, 1984).

Age at Which Study Takes Place

There is perhaps no area of language learning research in which more conflicting claims are made and evidence presented than in discussions of the optimal age for learning a second language. The different claims rest on widely different approaches to the question, and are not necessarily contradictory. For example, research that evaluates progress in grammar does not yield the same results as research on the attainment of native-like pronunciation; and studies that focus on rapid gain in the classroom or natural settings differ from those that are concerned with long-term achievement and language skill maintenance.

For many years, researchers as well as less formal observers generally believed that children, especially quite young children, are better able to learn a foreign language than adults. Some thought the child's greater mental flexibility accounted for the differences (Lenneberg, 1967); others suggested that there is a critical period beyond which language learning becomes much more difficult. Careful research, however, has shown that it is unlikely that anything so biologically deterministic as a critical period for language learning exists (Krashen, 1973). Children do appear to be more adept than adults at acquiring new phonology, but several studies in various European countries have shown that adults and older children learn morphology and syntax more quickly than young children (see Izzo, 1981, for a review of related studies).

These studies have tended to demonstrate that, in terms of ultimate proficiency, older children or young adolescents are the best language learners; for instance, a large study in Great Britain compared groups of children who had begun French language study in school at age 8 and age 11. The results indicated that after five years of instruction, the children who began at 11 had made more progress than those who had begun at 8 (Stern, Burstall, & Harley, 1975). These school-based studies make it clear that students who may not begin study of a foreign language until high school are not at a great disadvantage, and can acquire the language very well. It is probably also true, however, that beginning language study as a young child maximizes the likelihood of acquiring a native-like accent. Languages learned in childhood and then not used again in any context may be especially vulnerable to loss (Hatch, 1983); this is not surprising, since the nature of human memory is such that most adults have quite imperfect memories of their early childhood (Sheingold & Tenney, 1982), and language fades with all the rest.

Sex Differences

In many areas of language study there are no known sex differences. The few differences that have been shown have been in the direction of an advantage for females (see Izzo, 1981, for a review). A large study in Great Britain, for instance (Burstall, 1975), found that girls learning French were significantly superior to boys in all areas of achievement. At the college level, females have been shown to surpass males in tests of achievement in German (Scherer & Wertheimer, 1964). Females also score higher than males on the MLAT, have more positive attitudes toward foreign language study, and achieve higher grades in classroom performance. This greater aptitude may carry over to the maintenance of second language skills, once study has ceased, but no current research is available on this topic. Where differences have been shown, however, females appear to be at an advantage in the areas of proficiency thought to correlate with the maintenance of foreign language skills. Performance curves for males and females, of course, overlap, and there are both poor and excellent second language learners and maintainers of both sexes.

Cognitive and Personality Style

A number of personality factors have been correlated positively with success in learning foreign languages. These include the willingness to take certain kinds of risks, good pattern recognition skills, tolerance for ambiguity in a number of situations, and an outgoing and social personality. Fillmore (1985), for example, found that non-English-speaking children who acquired English easily in an American school were those who sought out and became friendly with native speakers of English, seizing every opportunity to socialize with these children and to practice their English skills.

Experience with Other Foreign Languages

Researchers have been interested for some time in whether it becomes easier to learn subsequent foreign languages after a first foreign language has been acquired. A recent review of the literature indicates that this is the case (McLaughlin & Nayak, in press). Language learning techniques that may have taken a great deal of time to acquire in a first foray into foreign language study come into play more rapidly in the study of additional languages. An expert foreign language learner appears to be identifiable. Expert learners have more strategies at their disposal, and are more flexible in trying different strategies. No research has explored whether expert learners also are at an advantage in maintaining languages; by implication, they have more maintenance strategies at their disposal. At the same time, however, they have the problem of interference among the languages they know--of keeping them distinct from each other; and they face the possibility of losing skills in one language as they concentrate on another. A number of languages can be maintained if foreign language study is embedded in appropriate cultural contexts that reliably evoke the required language.

Motivation and Attitude Toward the Foreign Language

As Fillmore (1985) points out, learners of a foreign language are more successful if they feel they need to learn the foreign language--if they are motivated. Several studies focus on the relationship between attitude, motivation, and language learning (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). They have shown that the more positively the learner feels toward the language, the speakers, and the culture associated with the language being learned, the greater the progress that is made (see Oller, 1981, for an opposing view). More is involved than the learner's attitudes, however. The kinds of values placed on the language being learned by parents, teachers, and, in the case of high school and college students, peers, are especially important. Students who in some sense would like to resemble the speakers of the foreign language are better learners.

Cultural Factors

Despite the fact that hundreds of languages are spoken in the United States today, American society remains overwhelmingly monolingual. Eighty-seven percent of all Americans report that they come from backgrounds in which only English is used. Of the remaining 13 percent, only about 7 percent use another language themselves on a regular basis (Grosjean, 1982).

How do public attitudes toward bilingualism and the relative prestige of different languages influence maintenance of second language skills? Some insight into this question may be gained from research investigating situations in which two or more languages come into contact. Such contact may occur for many different reasons, including, for example, changes in political boundaries, industrialization, emigration, and intermarriage. The result of language contact is usually a gradual shift in use from one language to the other. In some cases, one of the languages or dialects may eventually die out altogether, as is happening, for example, with the East Sutherland dialect of Scottish Gaelic (Dorian, 1982). A number of factors related to the fate of languages in contact have been suggested, including factors such as number and geographic concentration of speakers, age distribution of speakers, immigration patterns, and speaker literacy in the languages involved. In addition to demographic considerations, however, attitudinal factors have been implicated. Specifically, in situations in which one language is considered more prestigious than the other, the prospects of the less prestigious language continuing to thrive across several generations are poor. The chances are even further reduced when there are negative attitudes toward bilingualism and strong societal pressures to assimilate.

In the United States, language shift from minority languages to English is particularly rapid, partly because of the strong assimilative pressures exerted on immigrant groups. The image of the United States as a "melting pot" persists, and societal pressures for assimilation find their most convenient target in the issue of language. Recently, pressures for ethnic minorities to assimilate linguistically have increased. Several U.S. states have passed measures making English their "official state language." Proposals to legislate language choice at the federal level (possibly in the form of an official language amendment to the U.S. Constitution) are also being discussed.

The Linguistic Society of America considered these trends sufficiently disturbing to warrant passing a resolution opposing all such measures, "on the grounds that they are based on misconceptions about the role of a common language in establishing political unity, and that they are inconsistent with basic American ideals of linguistic tolerance." The resolution (LSA, 1987, p. 4) expressed the members' position that:

> The English language in America is not threatened. All evidence suggests that recent immigrants are overwhelmingly aware of the social and economic advantages of becoming proficient in English, and require no additional compulsion to learn the language.
>
> American unity has never rested primarily on unity of language, but rather on common political and social ideals.
>
> History shows that attempts to impose a common language by force of law usually create divisiveness and disunity.

It is difficult to imagine an environment less conducive to enhancing the prestige of bilingualism and encouraging the study and maintenance of skills in languages other than English. However, the possibility remains that proscriptive legislation may have an effect in part opposite from that intended; that is, in the face of open threats to their language and culture, minority groups may themselves become more united and more protective of their language. A strong ethnic community bodes well not only for the health of the minority language, but also for the maintenance of second language skills by students of the language.

The individual learner's language skills, if restricted to one or two specific uses, are prone to attrition in other domains. This process is especially clear in the case of many second-generation minority children in the United States who become "receptive" bilinguals. Such children often are addressed in the minority language by their parents, but respond almost exclusively in English. Over time, they become less confident and comfortable in the productive use of what was their mother tongue, and eventually have extreme difficulty producing more than simple utterances in the minority language, even though their aural comprehension remains good.

Similarly, skills of foreign language learners quickly deteriorate in the domains in which they are rarely used. For this reason, environmental factors such as the proximity of a strong and culturally rich ethnic community are important for the maintenance of foreign language skills. Where there is a strong ethnic community nearby, students may avail themselves of linguistic resources such as films, lectures, and newspapers in the foreign language. If the community is large, it may offer not only an active minority press that publishes magazines and newspapers, but also minority-language television and cultural events. The advent of videocassette technology has also helped make minority-language films more accessible both to ethnic minority viewers and to foreign language students.

Clearly, opportunities to use a language can be important to the maintenance of language skills. The issue of need to use the minority or foreign language, however, may be equally important. While a highly motivated language learner can take advantage of ethnic community resources, the less motivated or less focused learner's skills will tend, over time, to deteriorate to the level needed for everyday communication. Utility of the language in daily life is one factor that may relate to the phenomenon of fossilized errors in the language of adult foreign language learners. Many adult speakers--even those who use a foreign language on a daily basis for years--rely heavily on pragmatic and interpersonal skills to compensate for poor accent, limited vocabulary, and fossilized errors. Only when forced to use the foreign language productively in more decontextualized tasks do both they and their interlocutors realize the limits of their language skills.

Instructional Factors

Traditionally, foreign language teachers and researchers have focused almost exclusively on issues of acquisition. Accordingly, the relative merits of various instructional methods are typically evaluated in terms of student achievement. Methods that produce the highest levels of achievement (measured by whatever yardstick) are considered the most successful, while those producing less dramatic gains receive poor ratings. Little consideration has been given to issues of language skill maintenance, and to how instructional methods might be related to subsequent maintenance. The question is important, and ultimately may shed new light on foreign language instructional goals. The implications for curriculum and instructional method may be very different, for example, if the goal is to foster language skills and language-learning skills that can be maintained after formal instruction ends, rather than merely to produce a given level of competence by semester's end. Research in language skill attrition is still limited, and generally has not directly investigated possible instructional factors. Nonetheless, the study of both second language acquisition and attrition suggests a number of possible factors involved in maintenance.

Instructional Objectives

Foreign language courses often differ widely in terms of instructional objectives: Some courses, for example, focus primarily on receptive rather than productive skills, while others emphasize oral communicative competence over written skills. While different instructional goals obviously aim to produce different kinds of language skills, they may also have different implications for later maintenance of those skills. Moreover, it may be that some types of skills are more vulnerable to attrition than others.

Studies of attrition of foreign language skills acquired in the classroom, though few in number and generally weak in methodology, suggest that receptive skills may be more robust in the short run than productive skills. Studies by Scherer (1957) and by Smythe, Jutras, Bramwell, and Gardner (1973), for example, report little diminishment over the course of a summer in students' understanding of grammatical concepts and vocabulary. In fact, it has been suggested that the vacation period may provide an opportunity for students to reorganize and consolidate skills in these areas. In contrast, language production by kindergarten immersion students studied by Cohen (1974) over a similar period of interrupted exposure showed decreases in utterance length and increases in overall error rate.

Further support for the idea that receptive and productive skills may be differentially affected by attrition is suggested by the differential rates of acquisition observed in many individuals. This dissociation is most easily observed in children acquiring a first language. Many children display rather sophisticated comprehension skills, including understanding of grammatical rules, at a time when their productive language may be rudimentary at best. Differences in acquisition of comprehension and production skills are also common in adults. Nearly all adult speakers have some measure of receptive control over more than one dialect of their native language. Most speakers of American English, for example, can comprehend with little difficulty the speech of a downeast Maine native, a Mississippi farmer, a member of the British royalty, a delicatessen owner in Brooklyn, or a speaker of Black English. At the same time, few adults except those with special training are able to produce a faithful rendition of any of these dialects.

Given that comprehension and production abilities develop at different rates and seem to be maintained to differing degrees, it is reasonable to expect that students whose instruction has focused primarily on oral skills may show more rapid and extensive attrition than those whose course of study has primarily stressed comprehension skills. Many adults who have studied a foreign language in high school or college and who have had little contact with the language in intervening years themselves feel that their reading skills are more intact than other skills. This sense is undoubtedly partly a function of the nature of written language. Unlike spoken language, the written medium allows the reader to decode at his or her own speed and to reexamine parts that may be unclear after a single exposure. For languages that are related to the native language, clues may be present in the orthography that are less accessible aurally. In any case, it seems likely that most learners will not experience attrition equally across all skill areas, and that attrition may appear more or less marked depending on the instructional emphasis of the speaker's classroom learning experience.

Intensity of Instruction

A second instructional factor that may relate to maintenance of foreign language skills is the intensity of the program of instruction or exposure. While length of time spent studying a language is related to ultimate achievement, the distribution of study over time is also important. For example, results of the Ottawa-Carleton French Project (Stern, 1976) indicated that students enrolled for one year in a program in which half of each day's classes were conducted in French made more progress than students exposed to the same number of hours' instruction spread over two years. Other studies of elementary school children, college students, and adults also suggest that intensive programs of instruction yield better results than less intensive programs of the same duration measured in hours of instruction (Edwards, 1976; Larson & Smalley, 1972; Williamson, 1968). While these studies do not directly address the question of long-term language skill maintenance, they do suggest the possibility that language acquisition by individuals intensively exposed to a language (be it a first or a second language) may involve different processes than language acquisition by those involved in learning a language piecemeal over long periods of time. If so, the implications for subsequent attrition may also differ for students of intensive and nonintensive programs of instruction.

Developmental Considerations

Language learners of different ages and developmental levels bring different strengths and propensities to the language learning task. Children, for example, have a remarkable facility for rote memorization, and often retain intact memories in adulthood of material that has gone virtually unrehearsed for years or even decades. On the other hand, adults' metalinguistic and metacognitive skills are superior to those of children. Adults' more advanced cognitive level allows them to consciously reflect on language, to organize material in ways that will facilitate acquisition, and to appreciate and plan for the possibility that skills may atrophy. The degree to which instructional methods capitalize on these developmental differences not only influences the learner's ease and success in acquisition, but may also affect the extent to which attrition is avoided.

Curriculum Design

Finally, curriculum design is an instructional factor that may be expected to relate to the maintenance of language skills learned in the classroom. Traditionally, language instruction curricula have been designed with the goal of presenting material in logical, gradated units of "digestible" proportions. Little consideration has been given to the formal incorporation of maintenance techniques within the acquisition process. Valdman (1982) suggested several ways in which foreign language instructors might approach this issue in syllabus design. These include modifying the conventional linear syllabus to allow for recycling of vocabulary, and cyclical treatment of grammatical structures. Such design would allow review within the acquisition process, rather than requiring learners whose skills need refurbishing to plow through the original material in exactly the same form as before. No research has yet identified specific design features that may prevent or retard attrition. However, growing attention to these issues on the part of curriculum developers should begin to provide sources of data for research.

Implications for Foreign Language Maintenance

Learning a foreign language and maintaining it once it has been learned are difficult and challenging tasks. At present, more is known about the learning process than about the process of maintenance, but several general findings from the literature may be of interest to students and teachers of foreign languages.

Personal factors such as basic language ability and personality style influence the ease with which a language is acquired and, presumably, maintained. The age of acquisition makes a difference, with the chances of acquiring a native-like accent decreasing over time. Nonetheless, older students have an excellent chance of becoming proficient second language learners if they are well motivated, find the language interesting, and believe that it is spoken by the kind of people they themselves would like to be.

Cultural factors are also important in language acquisition and maintenance. A society that respects bilingualism will encourage its members to learn and use foreign languages. In ethnically diverse communities, students can avail themselves of many different kinds of resources. Languages that are considered prestigious are especially likely to be studied and maintained.

Methods of language instruction are related to the kinds of language skills that students maintain over time. Language skills that are particularly vulnerable to attrition require a curriculum that is specifically designed to review and reinforce skills even during the acquisition period.

Attrition, as noted at the beginning of this chapter, is a powerful force. Students who study a language in the classroom, even for many years, and then fail to pursue it in any way are almost certain to lose it. Language study that helps the student use the personal and cognitive strategies that expert learners use will enhance the likelihood of language skill maintenance; courses of study in which positive cultural attitudes are fostered and in which maintenance techniques are incorporated can help prevent attrition. Beyond these techniques, there are ways in which individuals themselves can fend off the forces of attrition. These include travel abroad, the use of computer-aided instruction, self-instruction, and specific uses of cultural resources in the community. The following chapters address these valuable ways of learning and keeping alive foreign language skills.

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II

Learning Strategies

by Rebecca Oxford, Center for Applied
Linguistics; and David Crookall,
University of Toulon, France

This book's title is optimistic but realistic: *You CAN Take It with You*. A skill in a foreign or second language certainly can be maintained after formal language training (language training that takes place mainly in institutional and classroom settings) has ended. Not only can language learners "take it with them," but they also can improve language skills after formal training. In fact, some language learners feel that it is only once they are on their own that they begin to learn the language for the purpose of communicating, and they can begin using it in a far wider variety of ways than those typical of the foreign language classroom.

By definition, second language learners reside in the country of the language being learned, while foreign language learners do not. Thus second language learners experience few problems finding resources (e.g., native speakers to talk to). More serious problems of independent learning face foreign language learners, as opposed to second language learners. Many of the strategies outlined in this chapter are therefore intended primarily for foreign language learners, although second language learners will of course benefit from them as well.

This chapter discusses strategies learners can use to maintain their foreign language skills after formal, classroom-based language study is over. Although some learners blossom after they finish language classes, even more learners, sadly, begin to lose their language skills soon after they leave language training. The subject of language loss or language skill attrition is an emerging issue for researchers, who are concerned that all the hard work and time spent in the classroom goes for naught after the final bell (see Weltens, 1986; Oxford, 1982a, 1982b). Learners themselves, not researchers and teachers, are often the most concerned about this problem. Complaints of former language students such as the following are all too familiar: "I took two years of Spanish, and now I can hardly order a beer or a cup of coffee in Spanish." "I studied four years of French, and I can't understand a word of it now." "Studying another language was a complete waste of time. I've forgotten everything already."

In such cases the first question is whether any definable, measurable level of proficiency was reached to begin with. The answer depends on a host of factors, including the quality of the language training, the degree to which the learner was involved and motivated to learn, the strategies the learner used to learn, and the relevance of the training to the learner's needs. Assuming that these factors were favorable, and that during the training the learner reached some level of proficiency, several approaches to maintaining this proficiency can be taken after the training ends.

One approach is the use of language learning strategies. As referred to here, these are steps learners take to enhance their learning. Some strategies deal directly with the language (e.g., imitating native speakers, asking questions), while others provide more general support (for organization, focusing, evaluation of learning, and managing emotions).[1]

Throughout this chapter, strategies are discussed as aids to maintaining language skills. If the factors just mentioned were particularly favorable duriing formal language training, then maintenance may lead to expansion and improvement of language skills; this is a matter of degree, not of kind. Therefore, the term *maintenance* implies potential expansion and improvement of language skills.

This chapter is addressed as much to learners as it is to teachers; the ideas and information here are of direct concern to learners, especially those who have finished formal studies of the language and who are learning independently of a teacher.

For teachers, some ideas outlined here can be incorporated into language courses to provide learners with greater opportunity to make language learning a lifelong and autonomous process. Indeed, teachers can be assured of a greater long-term success rate in students who have been suitably equipped to continue their learning independently. For learners, this information summarizes the range of strategies available, and provides a starting point for maintaining language skills independently. In addition, researchers in the area of language skill attrition may find this chapter useful as a source of hypotheses to be tested.

The Importance of Language Learning Strategies

Many of the best language teachers today have realized that the greatest benefit they can bestow on their learners is to help them to "learn how to learn." This often means equipping their students with tools they can use once the teacher's apron strings have been cut. Among the most effective of these tools are strategies that are useful not only for the classroom setting but also for the outside world. While learning strategies are important within the classroom, they become critical after formal language training is over. Used judiciously, such strategies are the major personal resource by which learners are able to maintain foreign language skills independently.

Former students no longer have a teacher to structure and present language material or to provide opportunities for practice. Learning strategies can go a long way to providing them with the kind of support that is often necessary for maintaining language skills. Language learners can learn about effective strategies through a variety of materials (e.g., the useful student guidebook on language learning strategies by Rubin & Thompson, 1982). Learners trained in the use of certain strategies are more likely to continue their language learning after courses have been completed, and thus maintain their foreign language skills, than learners who have had no grounding in strategies. In addition, many strategies that are useful after formal training can also be used to good effect in the classroom. While all students use some learning strategies during formal language training, they are often unaware of them. Many students, moreover, tend to use a limited range of strategies, and do not always use the most efficient and effective ones for them. Training in strategy use helps learners become aware of the strategies they use and the wide variety of strategies available.

If strategy training is given during formal classroom time and is integrated with the regular language learning process, graduates will have a greater range of strategies at their disposal after the course, and will be better able to choose the most cost-effective ones for independent learning circumstances. Teachers and students should realize that learners must judge for themselves which strategies are useful. "Usefulness" is ultimately a personal matter, and teachers can only suggest, not dictate. Indeed, learner training should help learners assess for themselves the relative usefulness of different strategies. Most people know what is "good for them"--too many teachers seek to dictate what is good for their learners, rather than encouraging them to make informed judgments for themselves.

It must also be remembered that any assessment of strategies' usefulness is based on several important assumptions. One is that the learners concerned are motivated to learn; that is, that they actively engage in some form of foreign language behavior. Second, such assessments are generalizations, and they will, therefore, vary considerably from one individual to another and from one circumstance to another. Some strategies will be useful to some learners more than others, even given identical learning situations. This leads to a third assumption: that learners have different goals for language learning, and these goals will influence their choice of strategies. Much depends also on *why* the learner wishes to maintain the foreign language--to visit the country, to listen to foreign radio programs, to get a better job, to be able to read technical materials, to pass a language test for graduate school, and so forth.

Because language uses are innumerable, and because each particular strategy may be useful for maintaining several different language uses, it is impossible to indicate for each strategy the kinds of learners and uses for which it would be of greatest use. Only the individual learner can decide this. The strategies outlined here will certainly not all be useful across the board for all learners. Most resourceful foreign language learners will know whether a particular strategy is appropriate for them, but they may often have to learn about specific strategies in the first place.

Thus the relative likelihood of a given strategy to be useful for maintaining language skills after formal training is suggested cautiously here. A general distinction is made between strategies that are likely to be *very useful* for independent language skill maintenance and those that are likely to be *fairly useful.*

Very Useful Strategies

The strategies in this section are likely to be very useful to the independent language learner. These include communicative practice, developing routines, imitating native speakers, using every clue to get the meaning, reading purposefully, using all available resources, selective attention, asking questions, keeping the communication going, elaboration, silent rehearsal, lowering anxiety, self-encouragement, self-evaluation, and self-monitoring. These strategies are also useful for initial learning in the context of formal instruction, but they assume added urgency and meaning when the former student is on his or her own. Teachers who provide students with a grounding in strategies during formal classroom work will thus be doing their students a double service.

Communicative Practice

Perhaps the most important strategies for maintaining foreign language skills independently involve practicing the language in natural, communicative ways. The term *communicative practice* strategies in fact refers to a number of strategies or steps an independent learner may take. These include: first, creating practice opportunities (seeking out situations and resources that have the potential of providing practice in the foreign language), and second, practicing communicatively (taking advantage of these opportunities to practice the language). These two are, of course, closely related; there is little point in creating opportunities if they are not actually used for practice.

Creating practice opportunities and using them means consciously seeking out, or developing on one's own, resources (i.e., situations, materials, activities) that will provide meaningful contact with the target language. Examples include going to movies and social events, listening to radio broadcasts or records, writing to foreign friends, and reading books or magazines in the target language. It is important to choose or develop resources that are interesting and motivating. Individual preferences differ. For example, one learner may enjoy listening to popular songs in the target language, while another prefers to watch foreign sports broadcasts on television; a third may go for good foreign novels; and a fourth may love seeing a play or an opera in the target language; but all four may enjoy participating in a regular conversation group. These activities are all potentially fun and motivating for the people concerned. An added benefit is that they increase the learner's self-confidence. The more the learner engages in these activities, the more self-assured he or she becomes. Following are some suggested resources that may provide communicative practice in a target language. Such resources fall into two broad categories: technological and human.

Technological Resources. Technology offers ways for the independent language learner to continue building language skills through practice. The "lowest" form of technology, the printed media, is of course the cheapest. A host of sources exist for printed foreign language materials. The resourceful independent learner will not have much difficulty finding it. Newsstands often carry foreign language newspapers and magazines. Magazines are published on almost every conceivable topic, from dollhouses to aircraft. Learners can gain much from subscribing to magazines from abroad. Many people have hobbies, and a foreign language magazine on a hobby is likely to become compelling reading. Books can be obtained from shops and libraries, as well as through international lending services.

Among sound-only media are tapes and records that learners can use to practice the language on their own. While records must be bought, the learner can make tapes. Recording sources include records, of course, as well as radio (discussed shortly). Now that cassette decks are available for cars, many learners listen to tapes in the foreign language while driving to work.

International shortwave radio stations offer a wide variety of programs in many languages. Many of these programs are designed for expatriates (and are thus suitable for the more advanced learner), but others are intended for indigenous people (and are suitable for the intermediate learner). Moreover, radio stations also broadcast in foreign languages (e.g., the BBC broadcasts in about 35 languages). Some stations also broadcast lessons for learners wishing to improve their own language (e.g., Radio Moscow carries Russian lessons, and the BBC broadcasts the excellent and well-known "English by Radio" series of lessons; see Norbrook, 1984). For further information on shortwave broadcasting, see Crookall (1984).

Sound-and-image media include television and videocassettes. The great advantage of these is that the addition of an image often provides learners with an invaluable context to which they may relate the spoken form. Not many cinemas show films in the original foreign language versions, except in cities with large foreign populations. Local television also does not carry much in the way of foreign language programs, though there are notable exceptions (e.g., Spanish programs in many parts of the United States, television channels in frontier regions of Europe). An alternative to these is, of course, the videocassette. However, a number of problems may arise. One is finding sources, either of prerecorded tapes, or of material to record oneself. Although prerecorded foreign language tapes are not typically found in the usual video shops and clubs, services may specialize, for example, in foreign language films. One is Facets Video Rental-by-Mail service, which offers many films in original languages (French, Russian, German, Italian, Spanish, etc.). Some former students may be fortunate enough to have friends abroad who might record programs from their television sets.[2] A further source of material that should be mentioned is that of direct broadcasting by satellite (DBS). For example, in Europe many foreign language programs from neighboring countries can be picked up using a dish antenna. In the United States, various foreign language programs, such as Soviet broadcasts, can be picked up. The problem of DBS is, of course, cost.

Another medium with great potential is the computer. Computer-assisted language instruction is a technological resource that appears to offer increasing promise, both for in-class practice and for independent learning (for a detailed discussion, see Otto, this volume). A considerable number of programs are available for microcomputers, including those designed specifically for foreign language practice and those written for other purposes, but in a foreign language. Although language instruction by computer is constantly developing, computers are still unable to recognize and correct faulty pronunciation. However, a large number of interesting language programs exist, for example, for practicing rules, developing inferencing skills, and using social cooperation. Computer programs written in a foreign language but teaching topics such as economics may be obtained by writing to foreign manufacturers. Such programs provide an opportunity to learn about a topic in a foreign language; in other words, the foreign language can become a medium for, rather than the object of, learning. This can be a highly effective means of maintaining foreign language skills. In addition, many entertainment computer programs, such as adventure games from foreign countries, provide excellent practice opportunities.

The next level of sophistication is international computer networking (using packet switching and satellite systems). This also has much potential, especially for the computer-minded independent learner. Computer networks may provide foreign language material in several ways. On-line database and videotex systems simply pour out data, some of which may be obtainable in a foreign language. Classic examples of such systems include, in the United States, The Source; in the United Kingdom, Prestel; and in France, Minitel. The amount of foreign language material on national systems is, of course, limited, but it exists (e.g., some Minitel services are in English; indeed, some provide English lessons). Computer-minded independent learners can, however, link up internationally to systems in foreign countries and thus obtain any amount of foreign language material. Indeed, it is possible to use a Prestel ID to link with Minitel in France. Related to such services is the already widespread bulletin board, pioneered in the United Kingdom and the United States, and some of these are run in a foreign language. One major advantage, often overlooked in discussions on using such systems for foreign language learning, should be mentioned. While on line, communication not only becomes meaningful, but it becomes urgent. On-line cost is a factor, and the necessity to work fast puts the learner in a situation of having to think fast and appropriately in the foreign language. Moreover, in such a situation the learner is engaged in *using the language* for a practical purpose, and ceases to focus on the language as an object of study.

Human Resources. Technology is only one approach to obtaining practice. Native speakers of the foreign language will always be one of the best resources for language practice. The place where native speakers are most easily found, along with a host of other resources, is, of course, the foreign country. It is probably through residing in a foreign country that an independent learner has the greatest chance of moving from language maintenance to improvement. Visiting a foreign country is an informal immersion into the foreign language and culture (and the success of more formal immersion programs is well-known). When surrounded by the language and the culture, the learner generally has no choice but to try to communicate in the language. Immersion in the target culture also helps the learner understand how the language is used in its wider social context. All the language-related subtleties of gestures, facial expressions, and tone of voice become much clearer and more understandable in the cultural setting where the language is spoken natively. Being in a community where the target language is the primary medium of communication may be difficult or agonizing at first; the learner may experience culture shock. However, after a while such difficulties recede, and the learner gains increased self-confidence in the language and culture. Zimmer Loew (this volume) presents a full discussion of the language-maintenance benefits of travel and study abroad.

Even without traveling to the country where the language is spoken, it is often possible to find native speakers in one's home community (see Jenks, this volume). Making friends with native speakers of the target language is often possible, usually by seeking them out individually or by finding an association, such as an international friendship club, that includes numerous native speakers. In the United Kingdom and the United States, many towns have a *cercle français,* for example, which serves the dual purpose of providing members with a social forum and bringing together those interested in maintaining French language skills and meeting native speakers.

Casual chatting with friends in the target language--either abroad or at home--is one of the best ways to maintain language skills independently. Natural opportunities to communicate in the new language will arise if the learner makes friends with native speakers. Friends are likely to invite the language learner to go on outings and to share a variety of experiences involving the language and culture. Another way of making friends, but at a distance, is to seek out pen friends. Various agencies exist to encourage such correspondence. Aston (1987) has noted that for most language learners, making friends with target-language speakers is considered one of the most important reasons for language learning.

Aston stated that the communicative syllabi of linguistic notions and functions usually fail to include categories for the kind of language that goes on in friendly conversations. These syllabi focus on functions that help speakers and listeners overcome "information and opinion gaps" through informing, persuading, negotiating, asking questions, and so on. While these functions are no doubt important, they do not form the backbone of most friendly conversations, which do not usually try to overcome information and opinion gaps. Such conversations typically focus on the development of the friendship itself, a sense of being allied, of having a mutual acceptance or understanding--what Aston calls "comity" rather than "communication." Instead of coming together to communicate information of predetermined importance, friends usually get together and fish around for subjects of enjoyable conversation, regardless of whether the subjects have any objective importance. Friends joke, laugh, quip, and make what is sometimes, perhaps misguidedly, called "small talk." The value of this kind of talk in maintaining foreign language skills cannot be ignored. It may be a different kind of talk from that taught in communicative syllabi, but it is certainly every bit as important to the learner. From the point of view of maintaining foreign language skills, making friends and chatting in the native language is extremely valuable.

All the activities named here, especially those involving getting to know native speakers as friends or visiting the country where the language is spoken, may increase the learner's motivation and identification with the culture of the target language. The more practice the learner has, and the more he or she takes an active role in creating or finding opportunities to practice, the stronger the motivation is likely to become.

(For a complete discussion of motivation and attitudes in language learning, see Gardner, 1985.)

Developing Routines and Imitating Native Speakers

Two useful strategies that come into play when the autonomous learner practices the language are developing routines and imitating. While these strategies are helpful at every stage of language learning, the independent learner especially stands to benefit from them.

Developing routines means being aware of and using prefabricated or formalized speech routines in natural settings. These include the common idioms that serve to grease the wheels of social communication or indicate typical actions, such as *ça va?*, *wie geht's dir?*, *¿qué tal?*, *kak vui pozhivaetye?* and *how's it going?*

Imitating native speakers often helps autonomous language learners improve their pronunciation, use of structures, and other elements of the language. It is helpful to pay close attention to the speech and writing of native speakers and writers (both well- and less well-educated) and to imitate elements that occur commonly or appear important.

Using Every Clue to Get the Meaning

Using every clue for getting the meaning is using all available information to guess meanings of new items in the second language, predict outcomes, or fill in gaps in one's own understanding. This strategy is not only essential in the classroom-based learning phase, but it is also necessary for maintaining language skills independently. It is used to aid understanding both spoken and written forms of the language.

Using every clue means using any and all possible information sources to understand what is going on in the target language. Certainly one of the primary information sources is learners' existing knowledge of their native language, which can often (but not always) give clues to the meaning of target-language words or structures. The learner's knowledge of the topic under discussion, or related topics, often helps learners get the drift of a conversation, an article, or a news broadcast. Awareness of the social situation, including the status of the individuals involved, often provides important information for getting the meaning. Close observation of the speaker's tone of voice, emphasis, body language (i.e., gestures, distance, posture, relaxation vs. tension), personality, and interest aids understanding.

In reading, one source of clues to meaning is text structure. This source is especially important for the autonomous learner who no longer has structured exercises or classroom discussions to clarify the meaning of the text. The reader should preview the material before reading, noting the introductions, summaries, conclusions, key questions, titles, headings, transitions, and ways of dividing the text. Many clues are found by noticing the author's use of words, phrases, numbers, and letters that indicate importance or priority (e.g., *first, second, third; primarily, secondarily; the main point is; most important, least important; a, b, c*). Taking a look at graphs, pictures, tables, and appendices can help the reader to get an idea of the key points or the kinds of examples the author considers important.

Now that training is over, the former student is on his or her own and must pay special attention to all possible sources of information. The teacher is no longer available to explain meaning or to provide hints or coaching. Taking responsibility for one's own learning means that the learner must become especially observant, alert to all potential sources that can help bring the meaning to light through inferencing.

Purposeful Reading

The more advanced independent learner should probably do a good deal of reading in the foreign language. One important strategy for maintaining and expanding reading skills is to read with a clear purpose.

Some possible purposes include finding out specific information for a job or task, browsing for general ideas or main points, reading for pleasure, looking for new grammatical structures or words to practice, and so on. Each of these purposes represents a different approach to the text. Depending on the purpose, the reader may scan the text for particular items of interest, or skim the text for the author's main ideas. At other times it is necessary to read more carefully.

There is a difference between reading to learn the language and reading for information or pleasure. In reading for the purpose of learning the language, the learner should read texts concerning topics with which the learner is somewhat familiar, so that a lack of understanding of the topic does not unnecessarily impede focusing on the language. When reading for information, the learner should focus on the content and not become bogged down in textual details.

Using All Available Resources

To guess meanings or find ways to express themselves, independent language learners must be resourceful. In addition to using all possible clues to meaning, they should seek print and nonprint materials to use as supplementary resources related to the language and the culture.

Dictionaries, word lists, phrase books, encyclopedias, grammar books, publications on the culture and history of the country where the language is spoken, and other printed resources may be called into play to help the learner understand what is heard or read in the target language. These resources may also be used to help the learner find the right word or expression to use in speaking or writing.

Tapes, computer-assisted instruction, television, radio, and other nonprint media, all of great use in maintaining language skills, are sources of practice as well as information.

Selective Attention

Selective attention is a strategy that helps the learner focus on what is important, and is particularly relevant to the independent learner. Selective attention is a preparatory, organizing principle that helps the autonomous, post-training learner to take responsibility for what he or she hears or reads.

Selective attention is defined as deciding in advance to attend to specific aspects of the target language (e.g., the use of certain forms for the past tense in a conversation) or to situational details (e.g., the use of certain idioms when the native speaker is angry). This strategy can also be applied to the written language. For example, the learner can plan to pay attention to the way in which a writer uses scientific terminology.

Asking Questions

The independent learner will find that *asking questions* of native speakers is a strategy of great value. Asking questions is also an important strategy for initial classroom learning. Many question types are useful. The learner may ask a native speaker to repeat, clarify, paraphrase, explain, give examples, or tell if a rule fits a particular situation. Asking for verification or correction is often helpful.

Former students must not be either too arrogant or too afraid to ask questions. The former student is not expected to know everything. The best attitude is one of alert humility, in which the learner knows that he or she still has much to learn and is open and active in seeking new information. Native speakers of the target language are generally glad to help; they do not usually ridicule the learner's attempts to obtain information.

Keeping the Communication Going

Communication strategies are very important in the early stages of language learning. These strategies are used to continue the oral communication when the learner cannot produce the right word or phrase. Although the main purpose of communication strategies is to enhance communication, these strategies may also aid in learning.

Some possible communication strategies include using filler words in the target language (such as *uh, let's see,* or *well),* using synonyms or more general words, talking around the subject (circumlocution), describing the object for lack of the right term, inventing a word that might convey the meaning, and substituting a wrong word that might convey a related meaning. Other communication strategies are gesturing, miming, switching to the native language temporarily, changing the subject, and avoiding subjects for which one lacks the necessary vocabulary or structures.

Independent learners trying to maintain language skills may have an increased need to use some of these communication strategies. They must make a particular effort to find opportunities to communicate and to keep the communication going. Staying in a conversation in the target language will certainly help learners maintain and expand language skills, even though the main purpose may be communication rather than learning.

Remembering

A few memory strategies are particularly useful for independent learners. These include elaboration and silent rehearsal. *Elaboration,* a very general memory strategy, is simply relating new information to other concepts in memory by means of mental associations. These associations may be simple or complex, commonplace or bizarre. For example, a learner may associate the French word *falaise* (cliff) with the English *fall* plus the French *aise,* or *ease.* The learner who is trying to maintain skills independently will need to continue to make many such mental associations.

Silent rehearsal involves silently repeating a new word or phrase before using it as a means of memorizing it. This is very useful, even to the more advanced learner. Silent rehearsal has the advantage of allowing the learner to practice mentally and to link the sound and meaning to other concepts in memory before having to express the word or phrase aloud. Some methods of foreign language instruction specifically include a "silent period" during which the learner is not required to speak and is allowed to silently rehearse. This principle can still be of use when applied to new words and phrases that the more advanced, autonomous learner encounters. The only danger is that the learner can be reluctant to move beyond silent rehearsal and never express the new words aloud, but this does not seem to be a common problem with learners who are really motivated to maintain language skills.

Affective Strategies

Learners use *affective strategies* to deal with their emotions, attitudes and motivations. These strategies are very useful for those who are on their own, without the support of classmates or teachers. Two general kinds of affective strategies are lowering anxiety and self-encouragement.

Learners can *lower anxiety* using various techniques, such as progressive relaxation, deep breathing, meditation, music, and humor. All of these techniques produce physical changes that enable learners to calm down and see things from a fresh perspective.

Self-encouragement (positive self-talk) is a strategy that can help the learner persevere. It involves occasionally saying positive things to oneself to feel more capable or confident as a language learner. Studies have shown that self-talk, either positive or negative, is a potent tool that influences the learner's self-concept as a person in general, or as a learner in particular. Positive self-talk can improve one's confidence, while negative self-talk can erode one's sense of capability. Occasional self-encouragement--recognizing achievements and not blaming oneself for lapses or failures--can help the learner feel better; feeling better helps to motivate the learner to persevere. Self-encouragement is particularly important when there is no teacher to provide support and praise. Former students must learn to be their own cheerleaders.

Evaluating and Monitoring

Strategies for evaluating progress and monitoring errors[3] are very important for maintaining language skills after formal language instruction ends. The reason for this is that such strategies naturally focus on learner independence; and in the post-training situation, the learner is, more than ever, autonomous.

Independent learners can train themselves to *evaluate* their overall progress, even without classroom tests and semester grades. In listening, the autonomous learner can estimate the amount of the conversation he or she understands (less than half? more than half? almost all?) and can tell whether listening skills have improved since the last week or the last month. In reading, the learner can determine what proportion of a reading passage is comprehended (everything? only a little? at least half? all the major points but only some of the minor ones?), and whether reading skills have improved since the last progress check. The area of speaking skills offers many ways to evaluate progress, especially when comparing one occasion with another. Learners can listen to their own speech on tape using a tape recorder; count the number of times they are asked to repeat something during a face-to-face or telephone conversation; and carefully observe other people's responses to their speech--do they seem relaxed or frustrated? To self-evaluate writing skills, the learner can from time to time review samples of his or her own work and note specific problems, particularly in spelling, sentence length, and ability to express complex thoughts. Learners can also compare their writing with that of native speakers of the language.

Self-monitoring means analyzing one's own errors and correcting one's own mistakes. Learners need not feel ashamed or embarrassed about making errors.

Errors are a natural part of language learning. A learner who makes no errors is a learner who is not using the language. Self-monitoring helps learners to learn from their errors and become better language learners. It is especially useful when there is no teacher to help point out or correct errors.

Self-monitoring can be broken down into several aspects. One aspect is recognizing the errors; this is the essential first step toward using one's errors to help improve language skills. Assessing the seriousness of the errors (some are serious, some are not) is the next step. Next the learner focuses on the most important errors and then tries to find out why a particular error was made (not knowing the rule? not having enough practice to internalize the rule? not knowing the word? confusing the word with a word in the native language?). Knowledge of why the error was made can help the learner to avoid making the same error, or a similar error, the next time. Above all, learners, especially independent learners, must accept the inevitability of errors and must feel that they are useful for further positive growth in the target language.

Fairly Useful Strategies

The next set of strategies is likely to be fairly useful for language skill maintenance and improvement. Again, the utility of these strategies depends largely on the individual learner and the particular situation. The strategies included here are: taking notes, highlighting, rule learning, reasoning, a variety of additional memory strategies, goal-setting, and planning.

Taking Notes

Learners who do not have the support of a formal classroom setting and daily or weekly assignments may find that their language learning skills become rusty because of lack of structure. One way to develop a structure of one's own, without a teacher, is to *take notes* in a systematic way. Simply put, note-taking is writing down important things, in either the target language or the learner's native language. Note-taking can also be a self-management tool that involves, and can help develop, a high degree of self-awareness about language learning progress. (Note-taking may be considered a basically cognitive strategy that can also be used for the purpose of self-management.)

Some independent learners find it useful to carry a special language-learning notebook around each day, or to have it on hand whenever there is a chance to use the target language. This notebook can be used for many different purposes: to keep a list of new words or expressions heard or read in the target language; to write down words, phrases, or structures that are not understood and need to be looked up; to record new grammar rules; to note sociolinguistic observations (e.g., how people use gestures, tone, register; social status of speakers in a conversation); to record observations about the content of conversations in the target language; to summarize or outline key points of an article or news broadcast; to record errors that should be worked on and note the reason why they occurred; to comment on learning strategies that were successful and those that were not; and to record the amount of time spent each week involved in the target language.

The notebook can be organized into sections for each of these purposes, or some of the purposes can be linked in one section. For example, a section called "New Words, Phrases, and Structures" could include new linguistic material that the learner has understood, and new material that he or she has not immediately understood (and needs to look up later). Another section called "Notes on What I Have Read and Heard" might include comments on content, style, and sociolinguistic aspects. Still another section called "Comments on My Language Progress" might include error lists, reasons for errors, comments on learning strategies, and amount of time spent.

The sections of the language notebook can be labeled or even color-coded, using a different color for each different purpose of the notebook. Learners can write in the target language or the native language, or a mixture of both--until they are comfortable enough to write everything in the target language.

Highlighting

Highlighting involves marking, underlining, starring, or otherwise finding ways to emphasize important or new points. The independent language learner might find it valuable to highlight new words, phrases, or structures in a reading passage.

Colored markers are especially effective highlighting tools for autonomous language learners. Different colors can be used for different kinds of information--pink for new words, yellow for new structures, green for interesting ideas, and so on.

Rule Learning

Rule learning strategies are often used in the classroom. Independent language learners may also consider some of these strategies useful, although they are not overemphasized here. Rule strategies that are most relevant to post-training language learners include: rule search/application, rule generation/ revision, and rule exercises. In this discussion, the word "rule" broadly refers to correct use of words, phrases, structures, spelling, pronunciation, and form in general.

Rule search/application means looking for, being aware of, and using rules in the target language. The independent learner, who does not have a teacher to point out rules, needs to take initiative in discovering language rules and applying them.

Rule generation/revision refers to generating one's own internal rules about the target language and revising them when new information appears. The learner in essence builds a formal model of the language bit by bit, and revises the model as time goes by. In the process of searching for and applying rules, active learners inevitably encounter situations in which they do not know the rule; then they generate a "hypothesis" that seems to fit the situation and accords with the learner's existing understanding of how the language works. If new information confirms the hypothesis, learners are more likely to accept the rule as correct. But if new information discredits the learner-generated rule, learners must revise the rule. This often takes place naturally, without much conscious thought on the part of the learner. However, the process of hypothesis-generation and hypothesis-testing about the rules of language can also be conscious. Learners find rule generation and revision especially useful for pronunciation.

Rule exercises are a way to practice rules, orally or in writing. For example, learners might independently review grammar points by using exercises in a language textbook. Many learners find that when they are on their own, after language training has ceased, they like to go back to their old language textbook and run through the exercises. The exercises sometimes take on greater meaning and utility once the learner is in the position of having to use the language independently.

Reasoning

Reasoning strategies are another type of formal language learning strategy. Reasoning strategies, including deductive reasoning, analysis of word parts, and contrastive analysis across languages, may continue to be useful to learners who have finished classroom language training.

Deductive reasoning is a syllogistic, "if-then" model for reasoning about specific elements of the target language. It is often used in rule generation and revision, discussed previously.

Analysis of word or phrase parts is useful to some independent language learners. It involves finding the meaning of a target language expression or word by breaking it down into parts. German is an ideal language for such analysis because many words were and continue to be created by joining smaller words. For instance, *Deutschlehrerverband* can be divided into *Deutsch + lehrer + verband* (capitalizing would be different if these were really separate words, of course) to understand the meaning, *German teachers' association.*

Contrastive analysis across languages means analyzing elements of the first and second language to determine similarities. Independent learners should concentrate on trying to think in the foreign language, rather than constantly comparing and contrasting languages. However, it is sometimes useful to make contrasts, as long as those contrasts do not impede the learner. For example, in French the word *éventuellement* might, to the native English speaker, seem equivalent to *eventually,* which means that something will definitely happen sometime; but contrastive analysis would indicate that the word is a false friend (not an exact cognate) that really means *maybe* or *possibly.* This distinction turns out to be quite important in conversation.

More Remembering

Earlier in this chapter, memory strategies were described that might be very useful to former students. Additional strategies include the loci method, situationalism, auditory association, mental imagery, physical sensation, whole passage learning, and repetition.

The *loci method* involves remembering foreign language information by remembering its location on the page, on a sign post, or in a mental picture. *Situationalism* means remembering a new word or phrase by associating it with the situation in which it was first heard or read by the learner.

Auditory association is associating a new target language word or phrase with a known word that sounds like it. *Mental imagery* means using a mental image to help the reader remember a word or phrase with a physical sensation or feeling.

Whole passage learning is memorizing a passage as a unit, such as songs, jingles, television commercials, poems, or jokes. *Repetition* implies repeating a new word or phrase as a means of memorizing it.

Of course, learners' sensory preferences (i.e., aural, visual, kinesthetic) influence the utility of these and other memory strategies. Independent learners should consider which, if any, memory strategies helped them during their classroom learning phase, and continue using any that seem relevant.

Goal-Setting and Planning

Goal-setting and planning strategies may be of some use to learners who are no longer in language classes.[4] *Goal-setting* means setting one's own long-term goals for language learning (by months or years) or short-term goals (by hours, days, or weeks). Goals may be written down in the learner's language notebook, or they may be stored mentally.

Planning[5] involves planning for (and rehearsing) the language elements needed to carry out an upcoming language task. For example, if a learner must go to the town hall to request a special form in the target language, it would be useful for the learner to consider the kinds of vocabulary, structures, and functions needed to perform the task.

Conclusions

This chapter has offered reasons for the importance of learning strategies, particularly to the more informal situation occurring after formal language training has come to an end and learners are left to fend for themselves. Two broad groups of language-learning strategies were described, those likely to be very useful to independent language learners, and those likely to be fairly useful.[6]

Language learning strategies are truly essential for learners on their own with no teacher to provide support. The teacher's role during formal language training includes, among other things, providing useful information on strategies to enable learners to become active, independent, and self-directed. Language learning need not end when the last class is over or when the diplomas are handed out. The classroom may help pave the way, but it cannot substitute for lifelong education. For many, school's end may well be just a beginning.

NOTES

1. Some of these strategies were originally named and defined by O'Malley, Chamot, Stewner-Mazanares, Russo, and Kupper (1985). New strategies appear here, and different names are used for many of their strategies in the interest of clarity, especially for the lay reader.

2. Nonfiction (as well as fiction) programs can be obtained through foreign friends, who record them for you from television broadcasts. A potential problem is compatibility of standards. There are three main video standards in the world: NTSC is used in the United States; SECAM is the French standard; and PAL is used in the United Kingdom, in most of Europe, and in many other countries. Overcoming these problems is not difficult, but it may be costly, as it involves the use of multistandard equipment or copying services.

3. These strategies are often listed among "metacognitive strategies" by learning strategy researchers.

4. These strategies, too, are often called metacognitive.

5. This strategy is usually known under its more technical name of "functional planning."

6. For fuller discussions of language learning strategies, see Wenden and Rubin (1987) and Oxford (in press). In addition, see Holec (1980) and Dickinson (1987) for general information and further references on autonomous or self-directed language learning.

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Resources

Learners and teachers might find the following addresses of use in their search for resources of foreign language material:

BBC World Service & BBC English by Radio, Bush House, London, UK.

Facets Rental-By-Mail, Facets Cinémathèque, 1517 W. Fullerton Ave., Chicago, IL 60614.

III

Self-Instructional Techniques

by John Means, National Association of
Self-Instructional Language Programs

This chapter explores self-instructional techniques that can be used for maintaining foreign language skills after a period of active language study (regardless of the learning format or instructional ambience). First, however, it is useful to review in some detail the special characteristics of self-instructional language study as used in the scores of colleges and universities that offer programs in various foreign languages through the methods established by the National Association of Self-Instructional Language Programs (NASILP). NASILP has 150 member colleges, universities, and secondary districts throughout North America.

The Four Ts of Self-Instruction

Self-accessed language study, in the academic context, is built on "four Ts"— text, tapes, tutor, and tester. Clearly, not all of these components play a direct role in self-instructional language skills maintenance; nevertheless, individuals will find it useful to be aware of the basic elements of a self-instructional language curriculum designed for formal academic settings.

Texts

The text for any self-instructional learning experience must be appropriate for use outside of the classroom—that is, apart from the structured environment provided by a trained teacher (i.e., pedagogical linguist) who uses the text as only one element in the teaching process. Although many texts written for classroom use are readily adaptable to self-instruction, it cannot be assumed that a book that proves successful in the classroom will be equally useful as a basis for self-instructional language study. Most notably, a self-study text must include grammatical explanations that are complete and readily understood, as there will be no teacher to elaborate on, or decipher, grammar notes. However, the book must be rigorously audio-intensive—that is, stressing the primacy of the oral-aural skills as the basis of language, rather than teaching a language for reading knowledge, which in the self-instructional context amounts to little more than code-breaking. Dialogues and drills designed to build oral/aural communicative competence stress comprehension and speaking skills, though never to the exclusion of the written form of the language.

Tapes

Until recently, language tapes were audio-only. While it is certainly true that audiocassettes will continue to provide the principal simulation of reality for text packages in the next several years, largely because an audio component is less costly to produce than video, several audio-video-enhanced texts are available. The use of video (e.g., videotapes, videodiscs) is exceptionally valuable in providing situational reinforcement of text material, and video components will become increasingly common adjuncts to language texts, notwithstanding the initial cost of development. Whether audio-only or audio-video, the tape component of a language learning package is central to study of the language as an oral medium. Indeed, in most self-instructional academic curricula, use of the text (the printed page) is preparatory to work with cassette tapes. If language is regarded, for purposes of study, as (principally) a mode of oral expression, then it follows that language learning is based on aural comprehension and vocalization, just as learning to play the piano has far more to do with work at the keyboard than with texts on music theory.

Tutors

The tutor (sometimes called a "driller") and the tutorial session are central to any self-instructional academic course. Typically, a tutorial group consists of four or five students and the tutor—the latter being an educated native speaker of the preferred dialect of the language being studied. While the tutor may be somewhat knowledgeable about linguistic pedagogical theory and language teaching methodologies, such expertise is not pertinent in a tutorially assisted program of language self-instruction. Rather, the tutor avoids most functions of the typical classroom teacher and confines tutorial activity to drilling prelearned materials in the target language. Because the most fundamental assumption of self-instruction is that students teach themselves--principally through their work with the cassettes (audio and/or video) that form the core of the learning materials--it is only logical that a tutor does not teach that which is self-taught! Dwyer (1979) describes the roles of student and tutor in the self-instructional African language program at Michigan State University: "The individual learner is the key ingredient . . . since it is with the learner that the responsibilities of learning the target language ultimately rest. The responsibility of the tutor and the language coordinator must be seen as essentially supportive of the learner."

The role of the tutor in an academic setting is roughly approximated by the former student's interaction with friends and acquaintances who speak the target language--in which the learner wishes to maintain active skills. As defined in NASILP publications developed for its member colleges, the tutor's primary function is to provide practice and correction using materials that the student already has learned through several hours of self-study with text and tapes. The tutor never provides grammatical explanations (even if competent to do so), because interaction with the native speaker is for the purpose of interactive language *use,* not explanation of grammar or, worse, linguistic speculation. All oral transactions are in the target language, never in English. Furthermore, the tutor reinforces and corrects student performance only for vocabulary items and grammatical structures with which the student is acquainted. This point is especially important because the introduction of extraneous words and alternate phrasing serves only to confuse the learner at a time when clarity, not complexity, should be the tutor's objective.

The tutor is well acquainted with what the student should know, providing intensive practice only of the patterns and vocabulary that the student is responsible for knowing. Before each session, the tutor gathers various simple visual aids that help control the interaction with the students (e.g., common household objects, pictures from magazines, maps, drawings, coins, pen and paper). The most successful tutors are resourceful in collecting (or making) simple "props" to enhance and enliven the tutorial session by providing a tangible simulation of reality. Students do not participate in tutorial drills with open textbooks. Although oral communication often benefits from visual aids, the printed page is an inappropriate crutch--except for those language learners who anticipate the support of a teleprompter when engaged in conversation with speakers of the target language. In other words, the ability to converse fluently cannot be tied to written cues or prompts, and reliance on the printed page for oral communication would imply that the spoken language derives from its written form--rather than vice versa.

Foreign language learners who recognize the overarching value of native-speaker speech and recorded (cassette) speech occasionally complain of confusion when they are exposed to the differing accents of speakers from various countries or regions in which the language is spoken. Indeed, academic programs in the NASILP network provide some evidence that learners who are limited to only one voice, whether a tutor's or a taped voice, have difficulty understanding the language when spoken by any other voice. In discussing student autonomy in the learning of a second language (English) at a university in France, Armanet and Obesejecty (1981) comment on the pedagogical value of "individual or group tutorials with [speakers] of different origins, thus exposing the students to different accents and speech rhythms" (p. 26).

Tester

The final component of a self-instructional curriculum is the tester--usually, a professor of the target language at a college that offers standard classroom instruction, and perhaps a degree program, in the language in question. The examiner is the one component of an academic program for which there is no clear equivalent in a personal self-study regimen, because those who learn a language outside of academia do not require testing at the end of each semester for the purpose of transcript grades. Nonetheless, it is useful to note that the examiner in a NASILP language program is responsible for reinforcing the primacy of the oral/aural skills. Such tests use the "oral interview" technique, and a typical exam closely resembles the rapid-fire give-and-take of a well-run tutorial drill. At the appropriate level (depending on the language), reading and, to a somewhat lesser extent, writing also are evaluated. However, at all levels of study, and in all modern languages, oral communicative competency establishes a foundation for most learning strategies, especially at the "basic skills" level.

The components of self-instruction for language *learning* are based on the same self-instructional principles involved in language skills *maintenance*. In light of the foregoing, the next section may seem self-evident, but redundancy has a respected place in the field of foreign language skills acquisition and maintenance.

Self-Instruction for Skills Maintenance

Successful language mastery depends critically on the *individual*--on the former student's positive attitude and active participation in every language activity available. Remaining ever mindful of the fact that all modern spoken languages are based on oral, not written, communication, former students' efforts to sustain language skills must focus on (a) aural comprehension, and (b) speaking the language at every opportunity. A common, and understandable, approach to language study as a textbook exercise in cryptography must be avoided. Although the development and maintenance of skills in a foreign language should not be perceived as an attempt to break a foreign "secret code," this is precisely what happens whenever a learner engages in the language strictly as a written medium--and then dissects, transliterates, and reconstructs the target language on a word-by-word, "English equivalency" basis.

Former students of a foreign language know that learning the *spoken* language is quite different from studying most of the subjects taught in high school or college. Literature, history, science, mathematics, and so on, are often learned from books and pencil-and-paper exercises. Language skills, on the other hand, are acquired in the way that skills such as typing, playing a musical instrument, driving a car, swimming, and so on, are acquired. Lessons are available in all these skills--and books can supplement piano study, driver training, typing lessons, and so on. However, no one ever became a good typist, driver, pianist, or swimmer by reading books on the subject. The texts are useful, but only as a guide to practice. By the same token, language texts are useful at the beginning of foreign language study, and they continue to be useful as reference manuals. However, students will not sustain mastery of a foreign language through the study of dictionaries and grammars any more than they would maintain skills as a pianist by looking at sheet music and studying textbooks on keyboard theory.

It is useful to think of language practice in two dimensions: *fact* (knowledge about language structure), and *act* (language use). The intellectual knowledge of rules of grammar is cerebral and conscious, and is available through textbooks. Review of "facts about the language" plays only a minor role in self-instructional skills maintenance. Written descriptions of a language's rules and conventions serve primarily to guide the learner into the physical performance targets of *act*--attuning the ear to processing speech, and accustoming the tongue to producing utterances in the new sound system. Simply stated, language comprehension and oral production (i.e., *acts)* represent mastery of a skill that requires physical practice that is both intensive and extensive. The former student acquired a degree of control over a foreign language through doing it: imitating the speech of a native speaker of the language and listening for comprehension to countless hours of dialogues and drills, and perhaps even unstructured conversation (as in foreign films, radio/ TV programming, etc.). The same tactics serve equally well in preserving skills acquired in a second language.

In view of a common tendency to attempt to reactivate foreign language skills by studying grammars and dictionaries, it must be emphasized that the isolated review of irregular Spanish verb conjugations, German declensions, or Japanese particles is of little value in retaining active command of language skills--especially speaking and oral comprehension. Experience at scores of colleges and universities associated with NASILP over many years provides stunning evidence that language learners drift into common, but serious, errors as a result of separating the act and fact aspects of language study. The most obvious is that language learners focus excessively on facts, while ignoring the importance of acts. All too commonly, language students cannot do much with their knowledge in the way of communication. The faulty focus is perhaps explained by the fact that most high school and college courses are fact-oriented, focusing on reading books, listening to lectures, taking notes, and analyzing concepts.

In most academic study, few areas involve the development of a physical skill besides those such as studio arts or athletics. When learning--or retaining--a foreign language, deeply ingrained study habits lead the learner to apply the familiar fact approach: reading the text as though it were a collection of essays on structural analysis and memorizing verb tables and vocabulary items devoid of any context. Such learners rely on the text as though they were studying history or economics, and think of the language primarily as a set of written formulas. *BusinessWeek* magazine, in an article on adult language learning, quotes the director of a commercial language school: "An analytical turn of mind is likely to hinder you more than it helps. Analytical people try to find reasons for everything, such as why there are two verbs for 'to be' in Spanish. They fight it. Flexibility and spontaneity, in short, are valuable characteristics in language study" ("How to Learn a Foreign Language," 1980, p. 134).

In most self-instruction, the foreign language is approached with the objective of act mastery of oral/aural skills, from which follows proficiency in reading and writing. For the self-learner, linguistic facts are guideposts that assist in the physical training of the mouth and ear. Hence, active drill with tapes, reinforced by direct conversation with speakers of the language, is the core of self-accessed foreign language study.

The foregoing does not intend to suggest that the study of grammar and the active practice of a language are separate and unrelated. Fact and act interrelate as language rules are studied as a prelude to language use--and mastery of oral/aural skills leads to a more complete comprehension of the structural foundation of the language. It is important to remember, however, that while reading about the conventions of a language can serve as a foundation and a guide, true mastery and retention of usable language skills are ultimately the product of language *use.*

Seeking Opportunities

Where are the materials--and opportunities--for reinforcing language skills according to the principles of self-instruction? Much depends on the language in question, because radio, television, film, and print materials are not available in all cities for all languages. The student of Spanish enjoys a wealth of assets in Florida and the American Southwest, while the student of Japanese or Chinese can find resources in Hawaii and California. Although not all of the following resources may be readily available in a given language, brief investigation may uncover that a community does provide access to many languages in audio, video, and print media--and, of course, native speakers (for additional suggestions, see Jenks, this volume).

Radio/Television/Film

Any opportunity to hear a language as spoken by educated native speakers, regardless of the subject matter, is valuable aural experience--training the ear to discern the sounds of the language, even when specific phrases may not be fully comprehended. In many urban areas, radio (and television) stations broadcast foreign language programs at certain hours during the week. Most commonly, such programs on local stations present news and music; the subject matter is less important than the ear's exposure to the spoken language on a daily basis, if possible. Of course, the most complete access to broadcasts from the country of choice is available through shortwave, and the cost of such equipment is an excellent investment in "ear training" for those whose access to native speakers and cassette recordings is minimal. Locating broadcasts of greatest personal interest can be a simple matter of trial and error, scanning the dial at various times during the week. The country's embassy in Washington, D.C. (or a consulate) may provide a complete schedule of programs. In addition, the foreign language department or audio-visual center of state universities often has this information, because such broadcasts are sometimes used as an adjunct to college language instruction.

Former students who have had only a year or two of formal study should not be discouraged if they discover that they do not understand much of what they hear. Accurate comprehension of even 50 percent of rapid speech pertaining to most topics covered in radio broadcasts is exceptional for most learners who have completed the basic skills sequence of high school, college, or commercial language courses. Even while not understanding a phrase, the brain processes the information and the ear gains added exposure to the phonetic structure (the special sound system) of the language.

In larger cities, it is often possible to see films produced in Italy, Spain, France, Japan, and so on, with the original soundtrack, at a movie theater or by renting them from an international video club. Despite the strong temptation to rely exclusively on the English subtitles, learners should try to glean as much meaning as possible from the soundtrack, using the visual context to fill in gaps in comprehension to the extent possible. When watching a foreign film using subtitles on television, learners should consider taping a strip of opaque paper across the bottom two inches of the screen, covering the portion of the picture carrying the subtitles. All films transmit meaning through setting and action, as well as through the context of dialogue. By taking advantage of every marker the visual component provides, the former student may be able to forgo reliance on subtitles altogether.

Audiocassettes are the basis of self-instructional language curricula, and are often incorporated into the classroom. For former students whose foreign language study incorporated an audiotape component, the tapes--more than the textbook--serve well as a review of vocabulary and structures learned. Those who do not have a set of the tapes developed for the course(s) of study completed can probably purchase them from the publisher. A complete set of tapes is the single most important ingredient in the self-instructional use of any text, whether for language learning or for language skills maintenance. Former students who used a language laboratory for audiotape exercises as part of a language course should ask the lab director about obtaining a set of the tapes. If it is not permitted because of copyright restraints, the former student should be able to obtain information on a retail source for the cassettes in question. Unless the cost is prohibitive, a complete set of audio- or audio-video cassettes is well worth the investment. Additional exposure to the sound of the language is often readily available through cassettes or phonograph records of songs in the language being learned, and the music of a foreign culture provides an enjoyable source of comprehension practice. Champs-Elysée (address given at the end of the chapter) offers a biweekly subscription series in French, German, or Spanish of cassettes that are similar to radio broadcasts, with talking, news, music, and interviews. Each cassette is accompanied by a transcript that includes a glossary for difficult terms.

While print materials (newspapers, magazines, books, etc.) do not exercise oral/aural skills, they are the foundation for reading skills. Learners who have achieved a level of reading proficiency that is adequate for comprehension of daily newspapers and popular mass-circulation magazines might find it of value to subscribe to a weekly journal from the country of the language studied. The local public or college library's periodicals section can provide useful addresses of major magazine publishers overseas. In addition, embassies in Washington often produce newsletters in the native language that can be obtained regularly on request. For those whose level of reading skill is elementary, even children's books or comics are useful adjuncts, though not always easily acquired in most parts of the United States. Foreign language bookstores in large cities sometimes stock children's readers in the most popular European languages, and newsstands featuring international journals occasionally stock foreign language comic books. Of course, such materials are easily purchased in any foreign country, and travelers would be well advised to purchase such items for later use at home.

Former students with a somewhat more advanced knowledge of the language might seek materials printed in the foreign language on topics of direct personal interest, such as hobbies, or even their professions. Cookbooks, astrological guides, how-to manuals, and so on, are printed in numerous foreign languages. Knowledge of the subject matter renders such material more comprehensible than might be imagined. In addition, people are usually more motivated to delve into a subject of special interest, regardless of the degree of difficulty. However interesting print materials may be, former students must remember that the written form of the language provides exercise only in reading comprehension, and is not a substitute or replacement for maintenance of the oral/aural skills of the spoken language. Nonetheless, well-selected reading materials can play a useful role in the reinforcement of grammatical structure and active recall of vocabulary items and idioms.

Self-instruction is often associated with "flash cards," usually sold as a set of a few hundred small cards that have a foreign word printed on one side of each card, and the English "translation" on the reverse side. These devices (by whatever name) appeal to the notion that a language is merely a collection of words, and every word in a language is precisely represented by an English word, printed on the back side of the card. These two ideas are dangerously misleading, and can undermine the ability to retain fluency in a foreign language.

Language is *not* simply what is found in a dictionary. In a rough sense, words may be thought of as building blocks, but they are of little use without the ability to manipulate the structure of the language. In addition, words memorized apart from contextual meaning (as in a sentence) are likely to be used inaccurately. For example, there are innumerable ways in which the word *do* (and its variants, *does* and *did)* may be used. A single explanation (translation) of its many meanings and uses in spoken English is impossible. Words have specific meaning only in specific contexts, and flash cards are not designed to take this fact into account. Furthermore, although words in one language often have no exact equivalent in a second language, flash cards cannot reflect ambiguities, nuances, idiomatic usage, and so on. Visual aids in language learning or skills maintenance should contribute to a simulation of reality—to the situational reinforcement of language as used in real-life situations. Flash cards do not contribute to this objective and are useful only at the most elementary level of study (e.g., learning word equivalences for common objects). Such cards are of little or no help in practicing pronunciation, even for languages that share the Roman alphabet with English (as many languages do not).

In discussing "learning how to hear," Dickinson and Carver (1980) correctly observe the value of cooperative oral interaction with others, noting that "autonomous learning does not imply learning in isolation, and many aspects of language practice are best done with others" (p. 3). Accordingly, a native speaker of the language is invaluable to sustaining comprehension and speaking skills. However, it is always wise to avoid the temptation to press the speaker of a language into service as a grammarian or linguist. Most speakers of a language have little awareness of the linguistic conventions and rules of grammar that govern the structure of the language.

Everyone speaks a language with native fluency, but without conceptualizing rationales of language usage. Thus, while it is always appropriate--and useful--for a native speaker to provide correction of pronunciation and serve as a model of *how* something is said, it is not useful to ask *why*. Such questions are irrelevant to the process of verbal interaction, and, unless the former student is acquainted with a speaker of the target language who is trained in applied linguistics, such questions often elicit inaccurate responses.

In summary, the learner should rely on a speaker of the language as a model to emulate, and welcome correction of pronunciation and phrasing while forgoing linguistic speculation and conjecture. Self-instructional language learners must not lose sight of the fact that they are their own teachers: Their success (or failure) in sustaining and reinforcing the ability to communicate in the target language depends on their attitude toward language as a skill, and on their ability to discipline themselves to develop study habits that strengthen language competence.

This chapter concludes with some of the dos and don'ts of self-accessed language learning. The following points are equally important for language learners when they are in a formal learning environment and afterward, when they are working on their own to retain their skills in the foreign language.

Dos and Don'ts

✓ Do use the language in some form on a daily basis. Ideally, you will have frequent opportunity to listen to the language through the broadcast media, films, or, most commonly, cassette tapes. If not, books, magazines, newspapers, and so forth, can keep your eye attuned to the written form of the language. The individual learner spends 8 to 10 hours per week with the language being studied, independent of the group tutorial or drill sessions. However, such language contact is most effective when taken in relatively small bites. The Foreign Language Center of the U.S. Defense Language Institute (DLI) produces text and tape materials for its students in dozens of foreign languages. In the Student Guide to DLI's *Headstart German* (1977), it is observed that "we all have our own ways of learning, but . . . studying at frequent but short intervals may be more effective than doing it in a few long sessions" (p. 5). Under no circumstances should you relegate language practice to the weekend (or any other such fraction of the week). Even on the busiest of days, a brief period of active exposure to the language is time well spent.

✓ Do place audiotapes at the center of your self-instructional approach to language learning. Without the tapes, your text is of little self-instructional use. You cannot ignore, or treat as "optional," the audio component of language learning and expect to learn the spoken language, regardless of the amount of time or effort devoted to reading textbooks.

If, while working with audiotapes, you find it difficult to master long sentences, you might try the "backward build-up" technique. Divide the sentence into short phrases, and begin drilling yourself on the final one (i.e., the end of the sentence). When you feel comfortable with it, add the words or phrase immediately preceding, and continue building in this fashion until you have reached the start of the sentence. When done correctly, this procedure will enable you to speak the entire sentence fluently, without stumbling or glancing at a text.

✔ Don't succumb to the temptation to study grammar texts isolated from use of the language for communication. Review of the rules of structure is not the most effective way to retain communicative competence. Audio (and audio-video) materials such as text-related cassettes, commercial radio and television broadcasts of a nontechnical nature, and so on, are useful for the retention of aural comprehension, as are nontechnical journals and newspapers for the maintenance of reading skills. Use a grammar book as you would use a dictionary—that is, for occasional reference, not as the focus for review of the language.

✔ Don't slow down your own comprehension by continually "interpreting" words or phrases into English equivalents when listening to the spoken language. Fluency in any foreign language presupposes the ability to understand native speech at normal tempos in terms of the language's own structure and vocabulary. A conscious effort to decipher what you are hearing for its meaning in English has more to do with code-breaking than with true aural competency. The same, of course, is true of the written form of the language. While you can usually read at any speed you choose (as opposed to listening, in which the speaker determines the speed), try not to approach the printed page as a cryptographic exercise. Even when reading their native language, people sometimes study a phrase or reread a sentence for purposes of clarity. As such, reading differs from aural comprehension in that the reader, and not the author of the written material, determines reading speed. Nonetheless, as you are reading this page, you are not consciously breaking down each sentence into its smallest units of meaning and reconstituting the pieces into a comprehensible whole. Accordingly, your reading speed, and comprehension skill, is grounded in your ability to grasp complete phrases and sentences in the same way that you understand the English phrases and sentences in this book, as a graphic (written) representation of the language as it is spoken.

✔ Don't tackle materials that are significantly beyond your control. Classroom instruction proceeds from the known to the unknown—from material you have mastered to new vocabulary, grammatical structures, phrasing, idioms, and so on. However, working on your own without the guidance of a teacher or trained tutor, it is wise to limit yourself to a thorough and active review of that which you already know and have learned correctly. Extended self-study that ventures into more advanced levels of the language, without the guidance of teacher, driller, or a self-instructional text specifically designed for the purpose, may lead to mislearning that will later have to be unlearned. Without some form of guidance, or even the trained ear of a native speaker, language skills maintenance should be primarily just that: maintenance. Developing more advanced language skills is a learning experience that is most satisfactory when supported by appropriate instructional guidance in the form of text/tape programs and instructor or tutor support, though the latter are seldom available to the self-learner. Language skills maintenance is best defined as the active reinforcement of your listening and reading skills through frequent exposure to aural and print materials at a level of difficulty that does not undermine your confidence with feelings of frustration and discouragement.

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Resource

Champs-Elysées, Inc., P.O. Box 158067, Nashville, TN 37215-8067, (615) 383-8534.

IV

Using the Computer

by Frank Otto, Computer Assisted Language
Learning & Instruction Consortium

Since the early 1950s, foreign language professionals have been concerned with individualizing instruction. The computer is an ideal tool for such learning because it provides one-on-one interaction and operates at the learner's individual pace. The added flexibility that computer technology offers can be exploited to accommodate a variety of learning styles through an ever-increasing menu of options. Even more important is identifying innovative computer-assisted instruction/interactive learning (CAI/IL) applications to help learners enhance and maintain their language skills.

Considerable interest has been expressed in designing and implementing exemplary programs to teach and learn languages with the assistance of computers. The feasibility of such projects can be determined objectively by evaluating how and to what extent CAI/IL can contribute to learning concepts more effectively by providing options that would not otherwise be available.

Characteristics of Exemplary CAI/IL

Designers seeking ways in which CAI/IL may benefit students by enhancing the learning environment, resulting in the increased maintenance and expansion of language skills, must first be able to recognize the basic characteristics of exemplary programs. The following guidelines are intended to help designers, as well as users, in their efforts to select, evaluate, and improve CAI/IL programs.

1. CAI/IL should successfully combine technological capabilities with desirable pedagogical principles so that these two areas are mutually supportive.
2. CAI/IL should maintain high levels of learner interest and motivation while offering unique opportunities for interaction.
3. CAI/IL programs should individualize instruction, simulating experiences not otherwise available, enabling students to work at their own pace, and gearing instruction to what is commonly referred to as the "mastery model"; that is, a fail-safe system monitored by a record-keeper that allows learners to progress from one lesson or concept to another only when current concepts are mastered.
4. CAI/IL software/courseware should allow learners to interact with the program and each other (if in a group) to the fullest possible extent.
5. The record-keeping function of well-designed CAI/IL courseware should allow all participants opportunities to achieve levels of ongoing evaluation.
6. CAI/IL programs used in academic settings should be a team effort involving professional organizations, teachers, students, and alumni working together to enhance interactive learning through innovative applications of technology.

CALICO (Computer Assisted Language Learning and Instruction Consortium), with its journal, annual summer institute, tapes and study guides, monograph series, satellite teleconference broadcasts, and other special programs and activities, is the only professional organization with the sole purpose of assisting its members in applying technology specifically to the teaching and learning of first, second, and foreign languages. Those who wish to become involved with CAI/IL by sharing information with others in the field should consider joining CALICO.

Teachers, administrators, and learners would do well to become involved with CAI/IL to a degree in keeping with their needs. There are many ways in which individuals can participate in the progress of CAI/IL, including the following:

- by simply learning how to use CAI/IL programs effectively in a high-quality learning environment;
- by designing, developing, and evaluating CAI/IL courseware;
- by programming lessons;
- by supporting user training to instill confidence and competence in users of CAI/IL programs; and
- by participating in professional organizations that strive to enhance the teaching/learning environment by observing high standards for applications of technology in the classroom and beyond.

Where Does CAI/IL Fit In?

Most observers are aware of many categories or stages of foreign language instructional programs, from conventional to high-tech. While many intermediate steps exist, at least three stages warrant comment.

Conventional Stage

The conventional text-based instructional curriculum is familiar to most students and educators. This pencil-and-paper approach has been supplemented by various media, including opaque and overhead projections and audiotapes. While there is nothing inherently wrong with the conventional stage, it is certainly possible to expand horizons by moving to the transitional and high-tech stages.

Transitional Stage

Most language-teaching settings are in the transitional stage; that is, the conventional text approach is supplemented with applications of computers at a limited level of interactivity. Unfortunately, most efforts in this phase have resulted in the use of CAI/IL to supplement existing basic instructional materials. While some programs are highly innovative and have succeeded in motivating both teachers and learners, the tendency is to consider CAI/IL approaches as peripheral to the central text materials.

Whatever movement is made along the continuum from conventional through transitional to high-tech stages, current programs must be evaluated to determine the extent to which they may feasibly be included as part of the high-tech phase, or adapted successfully to fit with modifications that will enhance the entire instructional program.

High-Tech Stage

The high-tech phase, by opening new dimensions, promises to have an immensely positive impact on the teaching and learning of foreign languages. As the computer rapidly establishes its validity as an instructional medium, teachers and materials developers are faced with the question of how to integrate the computer into the classroom so that it enriches and enhances the environment by fully exploiting the many capabilities of hardware/software/courseware, which is rapidly improving and gaining in sophistication in the direction of making learning more interactive than ever.

The following taxonomy is an annotated listing of a variety of authentic CAI/IL programs that can be used to promote communicative competence through teaching techniques and learning activities that enhance each of the following language skills: vocabulary learning, grammar, reading comprehension, writing, translation, auditory discrimination, listening comprehension, and culture. References are selective; the object is to arouse former students' interest in furthering their familiarity with CAI/IL programs. Each is identified according to whether it is transitional or high-tech, depending on how the program functions as a component of an overall language instructional program; a few are labeled conventional because they correspond to pencil-and-paper approaches.

Taxonomy of CAI Programs

Vocabulary Learning

- Games or word puzzles in which the user inputs the vocabulary and the program converts into a game (transitional and high-tech; e.g., *Crossword Magic* by Mindscape, 1985).

Recommended reading: Chappell and Jamieson (1983) stress the importance of learners' input in the field of computer-assisted language instruction. By understanding the potential of learner-computer interaction, those who are considering the computer for use in foreign language learning may be able to identify a program that fits their needs.

Grammar

- Exercises in word order in which the meaning of each response sentence is demonstrated through animated graphics (high-tech; e.g., *ESL Grammar Review* [for IBM only], COMPress, 1986).
- Programs that build the display interactively as certain grammatical concepts are explained, thus drawing the learner's attention to the pertinent part of the display (high-tech; e.g., *German Language and Culture: An Interactive Audio/Videodisc Approach,* BYU, 1987).
- Exploratory CAI in which the learner is free to ask questions of the computer and explore the target language and its structure (transitional and high-tech; e.g., *Grammarland* by Higgins, 1983).

Recommended reading: Kossuth (1984) reports on a project in communicative computer-assisted instruction for learners of German, which incorporates elements of surprise and variety into the sessions with the computer. Using a notional format, word games are used in relevant ways, creating a similarity to real conversation. This in turn provides a normal distribution of linguistic forms, rather than planned sequences.

Lavine and Fechter (1982) discuss the advantages of CAI for grammar-oriented exercises and describe a learning module to help ESL students prepare for the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). The exercises are modeled on the TOEFL exam; the student is given a sentence, one part of which is incorrect, and asked to determine where the error lies.

Reading Comprehension

- Programs that incorporate repetition or highlighting of the relevant part of a passage in response to missed comprehension questions (high-tech; numerous programs; contact CALICO).

- Cloze exercises in which the teacher or learner can control the number and placement of blanks (high-tech; numerous programs; contact CALICO).
- Programs to increase reading speed through the use of various scrolling techniques (conventional, transitional).

Recommended reading: Curtin and Shinall (1984) describe a computer-assisted university foreign language project using individualization. Its advantages include stimulating positive attitudes and learning efficiency, active practice, privacy, and opportunities for innovation and learning.

Writing

- Programs that take advantage of the computer's word-processing capabilities, making it easy for the learner to edit (transitional).
- Programs with on-demand, built-in bilingual dictionaries (transitional).
- Programs with the ability to highlight a certain word or phrase and have a translation provided (transitional).

Translation

- Programs with on-demand, built-in bilingual dictionaries (high-tech).
- Ability to highlight a certain word or phrase and have a translation provided (high-tech).
- Listening comprehension activities with video, making it possible to gain additional exposure and understanding in the area of nonverbal communication (numerous programs; contact CALICO).

Recommended reading: Wyatt (1984) describes and assesses what can be achieved in the learning and testing of the receptive language skills with computer hardware now available. He offers guidelines and suggestions for the development of language learning and testing software and defines three types of computer programs: instructional, collaborative, and facilitative.

Auditory Discrimination

- Programs that display phonemes on the screen along with an aural presentation of minimal pairs provide additional practice in the learner's problem areas (transitional and high-tech). For these programs, an audio peripheral is required such as Kay Elemetric's Visi-Pitch (12 Maple Ave., Pinebrook, NJ 07085, 201-227-2000).

Listening Comprehension

For these programs, an audio peripheral such as a free-standing or computer-controlled audiocassette player, audiodiscs, videotape, videodisc, or interactive television is required.

- Programs in which the learner hears a passage in the foreign language, is asked comprehension questions, and receives immediate feedback and remediation (transitional and high-tech; numerous programs; contact CALICO).
- Simulations of real-life situations in which the learner is required to respond to directions, a request, and so on, and is branched to a simulated result of that response (high-tech; e.g., *Montevidisco,* Gale, 1983).

- Dictation activities in which the feedback is detailed and immediate and the learner can ask for clues to make corrections (high-tech).

Recommended reading: Despite steadily increasing use and interest in CAI in foreign language education, there remains a shortage of information on its effectiveness. Empirical data on CAI-related studies in foreign language are almost nonexistent. Bush, Mueller, and Schrupp (1983) report the results of a CAI-based interactive video study designed to address this void, conducted by the German Section of the U.S. Air Force Academy's Department of Foreign Languages.

With the advent of videodiscs mated to microcomputers, sophisticated ways of delivering instruction while simulating real-world experiences are available. Gale (1983) reports on a program designed to teach Spanish learners at BYU using interactive videodisc by simulating a visit to a Mexican village.

Rowe (1985) discusses the efforts of the Defense Language Institute's Foreign Language Center to make interactive video an integral part of foreign language instruction. Interactive video is seen as a method that could profoundly alter the conventional classroom model of language instruction.

TELEclass (Wollstein & Southworth, 1986) is one of the most effective applications of sophisticated technology that improves instruction significantly among all learners while incurring only nominal costs. Demonstrated with language learners at many locations throughout the world, this approach has increased motivation and confidence significantly. Wollstein and Southworth describe experiences and highlight options available to learners participating at the CALICO International Symposium in Tokyo and their companion classroom in Honolulu, Hawaii.

COMSIS (1984) examined the effectiveness of two types of instructional technology used in a majority of federally supported bilingual educational programs: computer-assisted instruction and video instruction. The videotape technologies examined were determined by the configuration of the computing equipment. This study found that technology can have a significant positive effect on limited-English-proficient (LEP) students. In the case of video, the effect was concentrated in two areas: bidirectional television was found to make scarce resources available to geographically dispersed learners, and videotape brought the outside world into the classroom in the form of a versatile tool. Computers were found to have the potential for permitting students to learn at their own speed in a highly motivating and nonthreatening environment. The major impediment to the use of video technology in schools was found to be cost; impediments to the use of computer technology were the lack of instructionally and technologically sound software and lack of training in computer use and planning.

Adventure games designed for use on home computers are a potentially powerful instructional resource because they promote problem-solving using the target language and are highly motivating (Armando, 1986). The games, whose objective is usually for the user to defeat an obscure force and recover a precious object, are varied in design, and are most suitable for the development of communicative fluency in the language when they (a) do not focus on the mere manipulation of vocabulary and/or grammatical forms, (b) encourage meaningful discovery learning without ignoring meaningful reception learning, (c) create opportunities for interpersonal interaction, and (d) integrate communicative abilities. Research has found challenge, fantasy, and curiosity to be the most crucial motivating factors. Elements of computer games that contribute to language learning include clearly stated goals, use of language to achieve the goals, feedback, an uncertain outcome, multiple difficulty levels, use of hidden information as a communicative device, unpredictability, randomness, and engaging the user's curiosity and desire for novelty.

Sanders (1984) describes a computer game designed for learners of German that uses techniques of artificial intelligence to create a model of language understanding by computer in an adventure game set in Berlin. In addition to providing a concrete means for testing learners' language understanding, the game is a useful, highly motivating learning mode.

Culture

- Culture capsules such as a program in which the learner makes a choice of what to do in a certain situation and then receives an explanation of the probable consequences of the choice (conventional and high-tech; e.g., *Correct Behavior the Mexican Way,* Melendez & Taylor, 1984).
- Audio-video simulations that take the learner through real-life situations (high-tech; e.g., *Klavier im Haus* and *Montevidisco,* Gale, 1983).

Additional Technologies

- Satellite teleconference broadcasts sponsored by United States Information Agency through WORLDNET/EURONET links throughout the world. Discussions regarding applying technology and learning languages are held (high-tech).
- Satellite telecasts via PEACESAT (high-tech; e.g., *TELEclass* by Wollstein & Southworth, 1986).
- CALICO satellite teleconference broadcasts on emerging technologies.

Recommended general readings: Blomeyer (1984) suggests that the effects of microcomputers on foreign language learning and education depend to a large extent on social and educational contexts in which they are embedded. It is maintained that teachers themselves are the ultimate agents of educational improvement and change and thus must be continually provided with information and resources necessary to realize optimal use of computerized instruction.

Phillips (1985) discusses the use of microcomputers in language teaching by addressing two questions: (a) What can computer-based techniques do that cannot be done by any other technique? (b) Is it desirable or necessary to do so? Phillips concludes that computers are capable of creating learning environments with which the learner can interact.

Higgins (1983) examines two mental models of the teacher, *magister* and *pedagogue,* and suggests that conventional drill-and-practice CALL may assign the wrong role to the computer. Several programs are described to demonstrate what the computer can do in a nonmagisterial role.

Larson (1986) discusses concerns and decisions involved in planning or remodeling a language learning center, how to incorporate satellite reception in a language lab, how to incorporate different technologies into the lab, and the role of CAI in language training. This is a primary resource for planning and implementing learning technology applications.

Numerous reviews of software/courseware are featured in each issue of the *CALICO Journal.* Up to five reviews of pertinent software/courseware designed to teach a variety of first, second, and foreign languages appear in each issue of this professional quarterly.

Recommended readings: Van Ek (1975) catalogues the original program exploring functions, topics, vocabularies, expressions, and idioms and the English-language medium whose communicative mastery constitutes the ability to get along in a foreign society without undue difficulty.

The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (1986) developed a rating scale that contains generic and specific language descriptions of proficiency levels in speaking, writing, reading, listening, and cultural modes of communication.

Numerous articles in quarterly issues of the *CALICO Journal* emphasize the design, development, and evaluation of CAI/IL courseware.

Enhancing and Maintaining Specific Language Skills

It is encouraging to note that many additional software/courseware packages deal directly with each of the skills mentioned here. Those interested in more complete information and listings of these materials might contact CALICO.

Technology offers exciting and innovative options for supporting communication-based language learning. The following guidelines describe characteristics and strategies that make learning as interactive as possible while emphasizing communicative competence.

1. Use technology to focus on what people do with language in authentic cultural environments (i.e., communicative competence) rather than to concentrate on the form of language (i.e., linguistic competence).
2. The most challenging type of interaction is that of role playing in a simulated environment with a native speaker of the target language. (Interactive audio/videodisc programs generally provide this experience with a subjective camera that involves learners directly in a variety of typical events and situations.)
3. Drill-and-practice materials should serve the primary purpose of preparing learners for various types of communicative interaction. Drill-and-practice sessions provide stepping stones to experience with realistic communication

activities. Learners are willing to practice if such experiences build confidence and competence at the "performance" stage.

4. Linear learning is often contrived because most learners cannot put step-by-step sequences of activities into the proper perspective. Branched learning reflects realistic patterns of human interaction because a variety of options are provided. Learners spend significantly more time per task in branched programs because they want to explore all options of interest to them. Thus a program should provide as many options as possible and allow learners to choose the options and branches that are most helpful.
5. Learners should challenge lessons, segments, or modules that treat information and exposure to knowledge and skills they may already possess. While learners have a tendency to delve deeply into materials with which they are unfamiliar, they prefer to save time by testing lessons covering aspects of language that they have mastered. (Program record-keepers determine when students achieve mastery.)
6. Many excellent videotape and videodisc sources require a carefully enunciated audio source to help bring learners up to speed. The most frequently used CAI/IL option is that of slowed audio; students proceed to understand regular-speed native speech with increased confidence.
7. Concentrate on specific definable communicative functions to learn when it is acceptable to say what to whom under what circumstances. A benchmark work by van Ek (1975) led to the development of representations in several languages of functions, topics, vocabularies, expressions, events, and situations that are the foundation of communicative competence. Realizing that people communicate for specific purposes, van Ek identified the following basic communicative functions: exchanging information, evaluating,

commenting, expressing feelings, regulating/controlling activities, social conventions, organizing speech, and ensuring understanding.

8. People also need to feel comfortable with the following basic context/content areas: personal information, occupations, environment, travel and transportation, public services, education, shopping, entertainment/leisure time activities, personal relationships, and current affairs. Programs that stress work with basic communicative functions and basic context/content areas result in increased cultural awareness and significant growth in cultural skills--integral components of communicative competence.

Key Questions and Areas for Research

Former students are urged to become involved in promoting the use of effective CAI/IL programs. Definitive-data research studies would help quantify gains realized by using CAI/IL programs as integral components in the teaching/learning process in a variety of environments. In addition, empirical research is needed regarding ways in which CAI/IL programs can significantly enhance the retention and maintenance of language skills. Certain key questions and areas need to be researched.

First, are students able to learn more in less time with the proper use of CAI/IL programs? Experience at CALICO and Brigham Young University (BYU) suggests an unqualified "yes." Nevertheless, a longitudinal study is called for. Students involved with CAI/IL in conventional mainframe and microcomputer applications, as well as students involved in interactive audio/videodisc instruction, are able to enhance and maintain language skills better over the same amount of calendar time than students in a conventional classroom.

Calendar time is specified because students using computers tend to spend 30–35 percent more total time on task within the same amount of calendar time. This is attributable to the motivational power of the many programs that build confidence by providing positive feedback and focusing on individual weaknesses and areas of interest. Given that acquisition and maintenance of language skills represent cumulative effort and that increased exposure is desirable, this situation is to be recommended without hesitation; in fact, in the optimal situation, students would be encouraged to spend as much time as possible in a role-playing, simulated, and culturally authentic environment. Related questions include:

- What specific learning objectives should students be expected to attain as the result of CAI/IL programs?
- What specific roles should teachers, administrators and students play in evaluating CAI/IL programs?

Answers to these and other questions are highly individual and must be generated in house, because they depend on each learning environment and the particular goals of each instructional program.

A second question is whether levels of performance will be consistently higher as a result of the tutorial nature of CAI/IL. Again, the answer is probably "yes," because all students have an opportunity to master the materials even though this effort requires more time for some students than for others. Students who require more time to master a given set of materials generally invest their effort willingly, without concern about the total time on task required to achieve mastery. Teachers may be so concerned about calendar time in terms of a given number of class sessions per week that they lose sight of the fact that students require differing amounts of study time and lab time to complete their assignments at an acceptable level of mastery. Students do not see this as a problem. Teachers' responsibility is to open the learning environment and provide a variety of options to accommodate students' varying learning styles, and to provide a positive atmosphere incorporating immediate feedback. Related questions include:

- Through which CAI/IL approaches are students expected to arrive at an acceptable level of mastery (drills, games, simulated role playing, rules, etc.)?
- What roles should students and teachers play in selecting/designing, developing, programming and evaluating courseware materials in house?

Third, will CAI programs yield higher levels of retention because of the highly personalized nature of the instructional materials? An affirmative answer is likely, although longitudinal studies would have to confirm this belief. Students remain on task longer because they are challenged in a number of innovative ways. The record-keeper monitors how well they have done, in what areas they have difficulty, where they left the program during the last session, which areas could require remediation, and suggests choices for additional activities. Because learners choose among menu items, they are in control of available options that will accommodate their learning styles whenever possible. A related question is:

- How intensive and comprehensive should the language-maintenance program be in terms of enhancing and evaluating former students' language proficiency?

Fourth, will the use of innovative, computer-assisted design strategies significantly lower the cost of interactive instruction? Computer-assisted design approaches to authoring and filming, as well as new authoring-template courseware, should permit increased interaction with decreased time for programming and data entry. This area definitely requires further research and cost studies. Related questions are:

- To what extent can templates be used to streamline and normalize courseware design, lesson development, and programming tasks?

- What standards are acceptable and by what criteria should users evaluate the extent to which courseware is interactive?

Conclusion

More than 12 years of experience with research, development, and instruction dealing with trends, issues, and capabilities of CAI systems have taught three basic lessons of great importance:

1. Competent teachers and administrators must be centrally involved in the designing and managing the teaching/learning process;
2. CAI stands for computer-assisted instruction; that is, the purpose of the computer is to assist learning--thus it should be one of several components of a language-skill maintenance regimen; and
3. A major trend in teaching and learning during the past 30 years has been toward individualized instruction. This quest has not only altered the teaching and learning environment but has directed the attention of those interested in CAI to a new area of emphasis, interactive learning.

The increased flexibility of CAI/IL programs allows former students to enhance as well as maintain language skills and proficiency in a variety of ways that are more commensurate with diverse learning styles. Foreign language teaching professionals and learners should stay abreast of pertinent technology, evaluate available CAI/IL programs, and let producers know what learners need and what teachers think would be most helpful.

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V

Study and Travel Abroad

by Helene Zimmer-Loew, American Association of Teachers of German

That we live in an interdependent world is self-evident. Global interdependency can only grow, intensifying the United States' need for academic, professional, business and political leaders and citizens who are able to understand, interpret, and communicate accurately with people of other nations. There is probably no more direct way to attain, retain, and maintain foreign language skills and cultural knowledge than to experience a meaningful term of travel or study abroad.

Though not the only component of language study, nor a panacea, study and travel abroad can contribute greatly, not only to the individual's success, but also to the overall success of an institution's language program. If a class sets a semester, month, or year abroad as a short-range goal after classroom exercises, the prospect usually motivates students to work harder in the classroom setting. It brings gains in cultural awareness to community members, colleagues, and parents and increased visibility to the sponsoring language department. In many institutions, a study-abroad program is the critical element in promoting the study of foreign languages. A study-abroad program familiarizes learners with the experience of actually living in another country, and the possibility of doing so in their careers or travels.

For the independent or older learner, the benefits include personal satisfaction as well as career advancement. Often such a learner's outreach effort has a great influence on immediate family members, community residents, and business associates. In the world of business and industry, a financial gain may also result.

The need for international personal contact is evidenced by a recent poll (Kramer, 1987) taken among West German citizens about their opinions of Americans. It shows a surprisingly low level of personal interaction between citizens of two affluent, travel-oriented populations. Only 3 percent of the Germans had visited the United States on business and another 8 percent as tourists. Five percent had had contact with Americans in West Germany for business reasons and 13 percent as tourists. The remainder, 82 percent of all Germans, have never had any personal contact with an American--in a country that quarters 250,000 American servicemen, to say nothing of their families. The most prominent source of information about Americans is the television (85%), followed by reports in newspapers and magazines.

To maintain interest and combat language skill attrition, travel- and study-abroad programs ideally should be available no later than the end of the first or second year of college or second year of secondary school study. With younger children who begin in elementary school or junior high school, the students' level of maturity is often the key factor in when they should study outside of the United States. Ironically, the most common experience for American students of foreign languages--the majority of whom are not required to study language at all--is that they endure the most difficult, least rewarding stage of a program, the first one or two years, without achieving more than the Novice-Mid Level of proficiency on the scale of the American

Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. They reap few rewards because they do not know enough to build on later. For the older learner, the urge or need to pursue language study abroad at any time depends on personal schedule or career demands.

As a result of the recommendations of the President's Commission on Foreign Languages and International Studies (1979; see appendix), there has been increased emphasis on and support for international exchanges involving American students, teachers, administrators, and policymakers. By 1982, the President's Initiative on Youth Exchange was announced, and soon thereafter the Congress-Bundestag Exchange and programs with France, the United Kingdom, Canada, Italy, and Japan were established or envisaged.

Responding to the need to monitor the existing exchange programs as well as the new initiatives, the Youth Exchange office of the United States Information Agency commissioned a study by the Council on Chief State School Officers to assess the need for industry-wide exchange standards. The result was the establishment of the Council on Standards for International Educational Travel (CSIET) in 1984. The Council, a private, nonprofit organization, has developed standards, provided a system of evaluating programs, and began publishing a listing of programs that meet the criteria. The CSIET listing (1987) includes criteria for an organizational profile and educational perspective, promotion, participant selection, participant placement, insurance, operations, financial responsibilities, adherence to government regulations, and an annual review by the CSIET. More than 30 programs meet these criteria and are listed in the current edition.

What Research Shows

Much second language acquisition research shows that a positive attitude toward the target culture facilitates acquisition of the language. Robinson (1978) reviews several studies showing that the degree of empathy and identification with the target culture correlates with the pace of second language acquisition. The research also shows that the process of foreign language learning is not *in itself* sufficient to influence attitudes toward the foreign culture and cross-cultural understanding. Although foreign language teachers strive for such change, it is not an automatic outcome of language instruction. The drop in the study of German as the result of two world wars is a ready example of attitude change for the worse. Just as positive attitudes increase language achievement, negative feelings have been found to operate in the reverse (Robinson, 1975).

Because proficiency in a foreign language depends on attitudes and motivation, and because these can be modified, foreign language programs at all levels should incorporate components that create strong positive attitudes and increase intrinsic motivation. It is by now an accepted *tradition* that one of the best ways to learn a language is to spend some time in the country where it is spoken. The scientific support for this tradition probably began when Carroll (1965) measured foreign language proficiency levels attained at the time of graduation by American college students (*n* = 2,782 students; 203 institutions). In this first national assessment study undertaken by the U.S. Office of Education, Carroll found that the net showing of college foreign language majors was "not impressive" (an average of 2^+ on the five-point government language proficiency scale, which is between limited working proficiency and minimum professional proficiency in the audio-lingual skills). Carroll found that one of the two factors most strongly associated with level of skill attained was the amount of time spent in an area where the language was spoken, "clearly one of the most potent variables" (pp. 136–137). Students who had studied abroad or even traveled for a short period scored a mean of nearly 10 points higher than those who had never been abroad.

Even students of low language aptitude compensated for it through study abroad. Carroll concludes (p. 137): "Certainly our results provide a strong justification for a 'year abroad' as one of the experiences to be recommended for language majors. Even a tour abroad or a summer school course abroad is useful, apparently, in improving the student's skill." Since Carroll's landmark study, many others have corroborated his results.

Preparation and Orientation

An orientation program should help prevent the "mindlessness"--the naive belief that the trip abroad is no different than a trip to the next state (Becker, 1978, p. 3)--that often accompanies travelers. To benefit the most from the experience, travelers should study the language and culture in a focused, structured fashion at home, if possible, and then reinforce it abroad. Observing, listening, recording events and feelings, and developing personal contacts with native speakers are necessary skills for this undertaking.

The topics covered by an orientation program should vary according to the site and learners' preferences and needs. Any program should present visual images such as films, maps, and slides of the cities to be visited. A discussion of the destination's geography should be aided by maps of the road, rail, and municipal transportation systems. National and regional cuisines and leisure activities should be discussed, along with practical information about the money system, stores, and shopping. Students should prepare for the variety of dialects they will encounter by listening to tape recordings. Tapes of common expressions such as greetings, farewells, and so on, are also helpful.

Some teachers find it useful to organize the orientation program by cultural universals such as the following (Cleaveland, Craven, & Danfelser, 1979):

material culture; the arts; play and recreation; language and nonverbal communication; social organization; social control, conflict, and warfare; the economic system; and education, world view, and beliefs.

Preliminary information on these topics can be gleaned by reading and through discussion with native informants. Jenks (this volume) lists several relevant agencies and individuals. Once in the country, the traveler will add many facts and experiences to his or her knowledge about these topics. An awareness of the universals helps learners organize a vast amount of cultural information and allows them to be more proactive in seeking and sorting out new knowledge.

Orientation is a critical component in the ultimate success of an experience abroad. The traveler should also concentrate on concepts and vocabulary dealing with family, school, and community. Questions in these areas will undoubtedly arise during the stay, and the traveler should be able to respond. Knowledge about both countries' politics and history as well as political relationships between the United States and the country to be visited is also essential.

The traveler should be encouraged to take pictures of family, friends, community, and neighborhood as conversation pieces. Local newspapers, state or city maps, and brochures about one's home town, for example, are also helpful in a conversation. Actually preparing informal presentations to give while abroad both in the target language and in English on topics such as sports, political issues, school, family life, entertainment, or whatever interests the traveler also helps set the tone for the stay abroad.

The most effective way to evaluate an orientation program is to allow the students to judge what they learn during the process. Figure 5.1 shows a sample survey for orientation leaders to use in developing their own evaluation form.

Another component of an effective predeparture orientation program is outlining the affective skills travelers need to cope well in a new environment.

Now that you've progressed through the orientation program, how do you rate yourself on the following:

1. I know more about myself now than before the orientation.

   YES____ NO_____

2. I know more about my family now.

   YES____ NO_____

3. I know more about my community now.

   YES____ NO_____

4. I know more about the United States now.

   YES____ NO_____

5. My language skills have improved.

   YES____ NO_____

6. I need to develop these language skills while abroad:

   LISTENING___ SPEAKING__ READING___ WRITING___

7. I need to accomplish the following while abroad:
   a.
   b.
   c.
   d.

8. I need to work on my cultural attitudes in the following areas while abroad:
   a.
   b.
   c.
   d.

Figure 5.1. Orientation Program Evaluation

Note. Adapted from Fantini (1984b).

Winston and Anderson (1978) recommend self-management skills such as decreasing egocentric and ethnocentric perceptions, decreasing stereotypic perceptions, increasing the ability to empathize, and developing constructive attitudes toward diversity, change, ambiguity, and conflict. These skills cannot be learned from one day to the next. Rather it is important that travelers be aware of the need for these skills if they wish to gain the greatest benefits from their stay abroad. Often a negative attitude about the people of another country or misperceptions and misinformation about the other culture can make learning the language more difficult and certainly less pleasurable and beneficial.

School Programs

Parents' Role

Often parents have not traveled abroad, or at least not recently, and are as eager as their child to learn about the country or city to be visited. They should be encouraged to use personal business contacts they might have in the country. If there are family ties, a genealogical research project might be appropriate. Occasionally, parents will volunteer to accompany the group as chaperones or begin studying the language in a continuing education or community college class.

Raising Money

At the college level, programs often cost no more and occasionally less than a regular semester or year on an American campus. High school students who wish to raise money for a study-abroad project may organize the usual fund-raising activities, including both individual endeavors and class or club undertakings: a car wash, bake sale, raffle, garage sale, dance, or international fair; service group, church and other community group fund-raising; and parent-teacher support, among other means. The career guidance department can help students find jobs by advertising their willingness to work in the local newspaper.

Publicity

Students and parents should be encouraged to write articles for the local daily or weekly newspaper, including photographs before and especially after the trip. These articles become a source of cultural information to the readers and build their cultural awareness, stimulating potential language study by others. Writing such articles is an excellent way for students to integrate their experience abroad with their everyday life back at home.

Research Projects

Research projects may be part of the study abroad program. In addition to living with a family and attending classes, to learn more of the foreign language students should also be involved in a research project that has an interdisciplinary theme. For example, they might explore water problems of an industrialized town situated on a river; prejudice as manifested in the society being visited, or in the American community toward the foreign culture; labor unions and political parties; attitudes of the host people toward the American government and people; how people entertain; foods; earning a living; the structure of the armed forces; foreign policy; clothing and cosmetics; and so on.

Learners are encouraged to investigate one area more deeply, thereby honing their research skills as well as discovering the interconnectedness of disciplines and skills. For teachers, such research projects have the added appeal of allowing the language department to reach out and cooperate with other school departments. The study-abroad program that takes students out of school for a period of three or four weeks need not cause resentment on the part of other staff members; instead these projects may be planned as cooperative ventures.

Learning Strategies While Abroad

Learners should take time to review the strategies that make learning seem easier for them. They can give themselves the following simple test to determine their learning style.

I learn a language more easily if:
_____ I can see it written.
_____ I first learn the grammar.
_____ I feel relaxed in the classroom.
_____ I have support from others.
_____ I'm with my friends.
_____ I have an opportunity to practice.
_____ I hear it.
_____ Other ________________________

A more detailed strategy inventory for language learning is presented by Oxford and Crookall (this volume). Once learners determine their personal style, they can use these strategies to learn and maintain skills in the target language more efficiently. In addition to the primary strategies discussed by Oxford and Crookall for maintaining and expanding language skills, Figure 5.2

shows activities, arranged by skill, that can be used to create practice opportunities. Means (this volume) outlines more activities that the returned traveler/student can use to maintain language skills. The computer is yet another source of activities, especially for promoting reading and writing skills (see Otto, this volume).

Travelers who experience no culture shock in a new

Listening

Go to the movies, watch television, attend the theater
Listen to popular songs, operas; buy the texts or librettos and follow along

Reading

Read local newspaper headlines, articles
Read street signs; bus, subway, and train directions
Read magazines, books, and comics
Use a portable dictionary

Speaking

Interview your hosts, friends, acquaintances, officials, neighbors
Use the public telephone
Start conversations
Ask questions about anything you need to know
Talk as much as possible, even to yourself
Debrief with your host, instructor, etc., to clarify perceptions

Writing

Keep a diary
Write notes, letters, shopping lists

Figure 5.2. Ways to Create Practice Opportunities

Note. Adapted from Fantini (1984b).

country are the exception. Even with extensive, careful predeparture orientation, unexpected and even unpleasant events and interactions will occur in a first encounter with the new culture. The visitor must quickly adjust to new people, new habits and customs, full-time use of the target language, new routines, and the lingering effects of jet lag. Anyone can survive culture shock simply by viewing it philosophically, as a profound learning experience that ultimately will lead to a higher level of self-awareness and personal growth.

During the stay abroad, the traveler should keep in mind the self-management skills listed in the orientation section, monitoring the development of any of the skills such as decreasing egocentrism, ethnocentrism, and stereotyping. It is important to notice such behavior in others as well and note the circumstances of each occurrence. The activities suggested for language practice opportunities all have cultural overtones. The learner should use the same list and note the integration of cultural and linguistic components in the new environment.

The process of integrating into a new culture usually follows a pattern of behaviors (Fantini, 1984b). First the visitor behaves as a spectator. During this *culture adjustment period,* the traveler encounters and recognizes stark differences for which he or she may have been unprepared. The response is often defensiveness vis-à-vis the home culture. As more of these contrastive, comparative experiences and observations occur, the visitor usually recovers and becomes more involved and, as a result, more knowledgeable about the new culture.

The second phase is *culture learning*, when the learner establishes contacts on several levels and builds relationships. The visitor is simultaneously sorting out the meanings of every new encounter and establishing a role for himself or herself as a participating member of the culture, even though it is only temporary. The visitor gains greater self-knowledge through these new experiences. Subtle nuances of language become apparent through gestures and the context afforded by real experiences. Finally, meaningful relationships develop with the people in the environment, which often lead to more meaningful relationships at home after the stay abroad.

Debriefing

The longer the traveler has been away and the more isolated he or she has been from other Americans, the more difficult the adjustment period after returning home. Some suffer acutely when they are not allowed to debrief. Returnees should seize every opportunity to evaluate their experiences and share them with others. What have they learned about themselves? their relationship to others? about the language? the culture?

Not only do travelers reap intellectual and attitudinal benefits for themselves, but they can also share their new knowledge with those around them. They can tutor students, assist teachers, and present their knowledge in lectures to other classes, especially social studies, to a school assembly, or for community groups. They bring new skills and knowledge to their colleagues and friends. Motivation of others is a prime rationale for such activities. Sharing their slides, diaries, and scrapbooks with others is part of this process. Students may also pursue their journalistic leanings by writing monthly articles for the school and town newspapers on what they learned and by expanding to current topics--"School Reform in the Federal Republic of Germany," "The Effects of Spain's Entry into the European Community," and so forth. One way to assess the new perspectives and personal gains made is for the returned traveler to complete the survey in Figure 5.3 (p. 107), for themselves or to share with other returnees, if they wish. A further resource for debriefings is the American Field

Service orientation handbook series (American Field Service, 1984).

Young Children and Adults

Family and Adult Learning/Traveling Experiences

Many of the orientation experiences and exercises described in this chapter so far are applicable to the family group of language learners/travelers. The added benefit of having people of different ages learning together as a unit can often enhance the experiences for all involved. Seeing and hearing new words through the eyes and ears of a young child can be particularly helpful to more senior family members, if not inspirational. One small problem may be the lack of formal learning environments for younger children. If the family is not connected with a school system in the host country, it is difficult to find such a classroom structure for a child. The best solution is to hire a part-time tutor, using the local school system, the chamber of commerce, or friends and business colleagues for referrals.

Vacationing Abroad

A short vacation abroad can be an excellent, but challenging, way to help maintain language skills. It is challenging because the temptation and opportunity to remain in an English-speaking tourist environment is great; in large hotels in major cities, most personnel speak English. Tour guides speak English; waiters in restaurants that display international credit cards in their windows speak English. It is possible to spend a

Now that you've returned, it is time to evaluate what may have happened to you while you were away.

A. Complete the following sentences:

1. One of the most important things I discovered about how to get along with people from other backgrounds is:
2. A personal attitude or characteristic that has changed as a result of this experience is:
3. One thing about people in my host community that I came to accept with much difficulty is:

B. Put a check mark by any statements that describe how you have changed.

_____ I speak a foreign language better.
_____ I know more about another culture.
_____ I am more willing to try new things.
_____ I understand the values and life styles of my home community better.
_____ I am willing to accept other people's ways of doing things, even when it is not my way.
_____ I am more confident when meeting new people.
_____ I am willing to face problems and try to solve them.
_____ I am able to ask for help from others.
_____ I am willing to take risks and make mistakes.
_____ I am able to learn about people and situations by listening and observing.
_____ I am able to maintain my sense of humor in difficult situations.
_____ I have a better understanding of problems and issues that affect people throughout the world.

Figure 5.3. Debriefing Survey

Note. Adapted from Fantini (1984a).

vacation week in Paris or Rome without ever really having to speak French or Italian.

Those who are fortunate enough to be able to travel independently can avoid these temptations by staying away from the typical American tourist scene. Instead of booking hotels through an American agent, it is possible to write directly to hotels listed in books such as the Michelin guidebooks. In many countries, it is possible to find accommodations on arrival through an office in the central train station. (Travel books generally advise how to do so for a particular city.) The Copenhagen train station, for instance, has such an office; in Budapest, the national tourist agency Ibusz maintains a 24-hour office in the middle of town. These offices list a variety of accommodations, including modest hotels and guesthouses and rooms in private homes. Spending a vacation week as a paying guest of a local family is an inexpensive and linguistically rewarding alternative to staying in an English-speaking hotel.

Vacationers who want to practice their language skills should avoid signing up for escorted tours, which will afford little language practice. Local tourist attractions are usually reachable by bus, and those who are working on the language will find that getting there is half the fun.

Vacationing individuals or families who, for reasons of convenience or economy, find themselves in an English-speaking hotel can still find many ways to get out and practice their language skills, especially if they plan ahead. To get away from the tourist centers, they can take the subway or bus and go where the locals go, like the zoo, or the racetrack; go shopping in the suburbs or nearby small towns; eat in small restaurants; and go to the park, prepared to strike up a conversation.

Working Abroad

Work exchange programs have been growing in recent years. These exchanges enable U.S. college and university students to arrange temporary or vacation employment abroad and foreign university students to do likewise in the United States. The Council for International Educational Exchange (CIEE) reported more than 13,000 students in such programs in 1986 alone. Countries participating in these exchanges include France, the Federal Republic of Germany, and Costa Rica (where languages other than English are spoken), as well as the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Ireland, Jamaica, and Australia.

The increase in these programs is credited to a growing interest in practical training, a recognition of the value of international experiential educational opportunities, and the desire to learn a foreign language. There is probably no better way to assimilate the language and culture of a country than to work side-by-side with native speakers for extended periods each day.

Another advantage to a work exchange program is that students can earn a substantial portion of their travel and living expenses, making the experience more affordable than most formal college programs that require tuition payments.

A model program, now more than 25 years old, is conducted between the University of Louisville and one of its five sister cities, Montpellier, France. The program has been so successful that the university plans to expand the work exchange concept to others of its sister cities. In addition to the advantages already cited, these programs promote "optional" community involvement in an internationally focused program (Herschberg & Van Fleet, 1987). Through such involvement, citizens, businesses, and local, county, and state governments become aware and supportive of the university's academic activity and actually assist it in many ways. New constituencies have been identified: small businesses, ethnic societies, and other community resources.

Among the program results at Louisville are greater language competence among returning students--especially in the listening and speaking skills--and greater linguistic maturity, cultural sensitivity, and self-confidence, not to mention new work skills. In addition, students may earn up to three semester hours of credit in conversational French based on a testing program administered at the end of the exchange program.

Another type of program that is gaining in interest is the business foreign language overseas internship program. Michigan State University offers such an experiential component for business/foreign language graduates in Germany (Paulsell, 1983). The foreign language component of the program is complemented by comparative and contrastive business practice studies between home and target cultures along with the practical business internship experience in Germany.

Older Learners/Travelers

One of the largest untapped groups of Americans with potential for language learning is retired people. Often the abundance of leisure time allows seniors to study and travel beyond the wildest expectations of their youth and working years. Now they are ready, willing, and quite able to learn another language in another environment. Enrolling in a foreign language course at a community college, continuing education program, or adult education program is the most likely starting point, with a study trip abroad as the culmination.

Whether attempting language study for the first time or refreshing skills after decades of no contact with a language, older learners (55 and above) have special characteristics that language instructors should take into account. They tend to have a strong orientation to the printed word; they learn concepts a bit more slowly, but better than younger learners; they are somewhat hesitant to speak; they are more concerned with accuracy than with communication (i.e., form rather than content); and some may have some sight or hearing problems that require adjustment in learning stimuli (e.g., size of print on transparencies, or level of sound on an audio- or videotape).

Conclusion

Study abroad is good for foreign language learners. Anecdotal reports as well as extensive research show conclusively that students do, in fact, return better speakers of the target language, more open to others, and better able to cope with complexity, to name but a few benefits.

However, success is not assured without careful planning and structure, before, during, and after the period abroad. Whether the learner is alone or in a small or large group; a teenager, college student, an adult traveling for pleasure or on business, or a senior citizen, hard work by all concerned is necessary throughout these phases so that the ultimate advantages accrue to the traveler. A longer stay gives the learner more latitude. That is, the luxury of a six-month or yearlong study period reduces the negative effect of minimal linguistic and cultural preparation because the traveler has more time to make up the deficits. However, what happens to traveler-learners abroad matters deeply to them and to everyone concerned. They take not only themselves but their schools, friends, family, values, and attitudes and return as broader individuals, more empathetic and more discriminating.

The physical and mental efforts and financial resources required for study-abroad programs should be recognized, and those concerned in any way with such efforts should strive to provide the best possible medium for the individual's intellectual and mental growth.

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Appendix

Strength Through Wisdom: A Critique of U.S. Capability. A report to the president from the President's Commission on Foreign Languages and International Studies (November 1979).

P. 16 H. International school exchanges involving students, teachers, administrators and policy-makers should be expanded through the Department of Education and U.S. International Communication Agency (USICA)-funded programs as well as through the private sector.

IV. International Education Exchanges

A. Within the context of increased private initiatives and support for exchanges, funding for USICA's exchange of persons activities should be increased to $60 million immediately and to $100 million by 1985.

B. Within the limits of funding, the Fulbright program should include exceptional junior and senior undergraduates and provide incentive funding to higher education institutions towards costs of establishing reciprocal undergraduate exchanges, especially in neglected world regions.

C. In expanding exchanges, USICA should consider world areas under-represented in American research and subject fields most apt to benefit from increased international perspectives.

D. USICA/ECA (Educational and Cultural Affairs Directorate) should have increased support to enable U.S. cultural staff abroad to assist more with exchanges.

E. USICA/ECA should move more rapidly to implement its presidential mandate to coordinate all U.S.

government exchange programs and to serve as a focal point for private exchanges.

F. NEH should have increased funds to support the work of U.S. researchers involved in exchanges. NSF should have increased funds to give more U.S. scientists access to first-rate scientific work abroad.

G. Private foundations should enlarge their commitment and leadership in international educational exchanges.

H. Colleges and universities should encourage and support more international exchanges of students, teachers and researchers and look more to the opportunity for encouraging international perspectives offered by the presence of foreign students and other visitors from abroad.

VI

The Community as a Cultural Learning Resource

by Frederick L. Jenks, Florida State University

This chapter focuses on the community as a vibrant treasure for ongoing learning, particularly as it is related to language and culture. The community environment is highly conducive to such learning. A community is a social group living in a specific locality. It consists of people and societal institutions that respond to the people's needs. Among these needs are safety, public services, and, of course, education. The ability of society to satisfy these needs is a benchmark of its development and cohesion. Here, education is the primary topic--education through formal institutions (i.e., schools) and education through informal social contacts for the purpose of deepening understanding of other cultures.

How can a person step into the community with the goal of learning about other languages and their speakers' culture? The opportunities, many of which are suggested here, are as numerous and varied as the circumstances for human interaction. However, a given suggestion may not apply to all locales. In fact, none may be relevant to some places. If a former foreign language student is unable to extrapolate from this chapter's suggestions to the local language/cultural milieu, information provided in other chapters should be more beneficial.

The section of this chapter entitled "For Further Reading" lists numerous articles that provide in-depth information on the subjects cited. In addition, some key reference books and addresses are included. For example, the *Encyclopedia of Organizations* (Koek & Martin, 1987) contains a comprehensive list of recognized associations, their mission statements, addresses, and memberships; the book is a sole source of information on dozens of international exchange agencies and civic/service groups.

In order to seek, find, and learn about other foreign languages and cultures, however, the individual must be especially pro-active in many ways. The pro-active seeker must be particularly conscious of two factors: the level of commitment to taking charge of his or her own learning and the kinds of learning situations that can be sustained given time, money, work and other constraints. Thus, while the learner must be intrinsically motivated to learn, he or she must also be realistic about the extent of personal involvement with others that will be possible and comfortable. Most of the community-based activities mentioned in the following section bring together individuals who wish to help others and wish to maintain or develop language/cultural skills in the process. Generally speaking, participants do not profit fully from these organizations unless they are willing to become actively involved in them.

Community-Based Resources

Throughout the United States, there are innumerable community agencies and services with international missions. A wide variety of projects for international visitors, refugees, immigrants, and naturalized citizens have emerged. Interagency cooperation has developed to address large emergencies, such as the refugee influxes from Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam in the 1970s and by the Cuban Marielitas in the early 1980s. In a fascinating way, the American nation of immigrants has observed both high degrees of assimilation and enduring nonassimilation. Some ethnic groups have adopted new life styles rapidly; others have done so partially. Still others retain and maintain their native languages and cultures within the larger American context.

There is no other nation where so many different languages can be heard and spoken and where so many diverse cultures bind segments of the population to one another. Thus it is not difficult to find a way to learn about other languages and cultures. The populations exist, and they are accessible through many local institutions.

International Centers

Honolulu, Los Angeles, and New York City come swiftly to mind as multilingual and multicultural cities. All are known for their subcommunities, their "Chinatowns" or "Little Havanas." All have thriving, active international centers, some combining trade and educational/cultural missions. Many other American cities have such centers as well. An example of a community-based international center in a non-seaport city is the International House in Charlotte, N.C. Founded seven years ago by area residents, the International House exists to help international newcomers, to recognize and aid the plight of strangers in a foreign land, and to sponsor international interaction programs. The variety of International House activities supported by corporations, foundations, community agencies, and private citizens is impressive indeed. The following sampling of activities illustrates the range of opportunities for involvement by U.S. citizens:

- International Connection: internationals practice speaking English with native speakers
- International Women's Friendship Group
- American Daily Living Series: a program that provides basic information about American life
- Language Hours: Conversation practice groups in foreign languages
- Child and health care: Services and referrals to local hospitals

- Wish List: furniture and household items for loan or long-term use are donated for newly arrived families
- Benefit concert series: fund-raising events bringing international music, dance and theatre to Charlotte
- Home for the holidays: home stays for international students and others
- Sister Cities: exchange visits between Charlotte and Krefeld, West Germany
- Cultural awareness series: Monthly programs that focus on one country or international event

Many other activities fall under the auspices of the International House; through interagency cooperation, even art exhibits, special museum displays, and local ethnic events are co-listed and publicized in local newspapers.

Every activity depends on the support of the permanent residents, local businesses and business associations (i.e., the Chamber of Commerce), and philanthropic organizations. However, what Charlotte has achieved can happen anywhere, regardless of the size of a community. There is little doubt that this center was conceived by a handful of hard-working volunteers in search of language and cultural learning.

Local and State Government Projects

Many cities have established exchange relationships with cities overseas. Commonly known as sister cities, the two locales cooperate in cultural and educational planning involving "people exchanges." A few telephone calls to local service agencies can locate the headquarters of the local sister cities program--probably the home of a volunteer.

Most state governments sponsor international programs that rely heavily on the labor of interested residents. In Florida, a large number of service and educational projects flourish, such as the Florida Association of Voluntary Agencies for Caribbean Action and the Florida-Colombia

Alliance. In addition, through the encouragement of the governor's office, centers for educational interchange have been inaugurated between Florida and Brazil, Canada, the Caribbean Basin, and Costa Rica. All such programs rely on the voluntarism of state residents.

Ethnic Clubs

Wherever linguistic minority groups settled after initial entry into the United States, ethnic social and self-help clubs have been formed to maintain the language and traditions of the "old country" in the new homeland and to help newcomers. Churches often provide spiritual, social, and even financial sustenance. The clubs are linked to the church through dual memberships of participants. For example, Greek ethnic clubs may be tied to Greek Orthodox churches; Lebanese-American clubs share membership with nearby Roman Catholic churches; and German clubs are often associated with Lutheran congregations.

Tampa's Ybor City district is home to the Club Asturiano, a social and cultural association that has united the Hispanic population for nearly a century. With domino tables, a spacious lounge, a ballroom and an impressive library, the club has served as a gathering place for four generations of members. In addition to keeping its members in touch with their cultural heritage, it has provided a wide variety of social services outside the club's walls.

Such ethnic organizations were politically active during the late 1960s as a wave of multicultural positivism swept the United States. Programs in ethnic studies sprang up in many colleges, and multicultural organizations reached out to bring to their communities a renewed sense of pride in their cultural roots. Apparently as a by-product of this era, summertime ethnic celebrations have become popular; what was once little more than a block party has grown into a spectacular citywide event in many cities. Today, these activities are major attractions in cities such as Chicago, Detroit, and Los Angeles.

A careful search can uncover exciting surprises. For example, an ethnic day-care center may be sponsored by a local church or club. Depending somewhat on the attitudes of its participants, the center may be open to people outside the ethnic community. If so, parents can use the service as a vehicle for cross-cultural learning while working with other parents and simultaneously immersing young learners in a bicultural environment.

Ethnic /Language Camps

In no fewer than 26 states, language camps operate to provide immersion experiences for participants of all ages; Vines (1983) provides a comprehensive guide to such camps. It is a great way to meet like-minded people while on vacation. Camps exist for the commonly taught languages (i.e., French, Spanish, German, and Italian), as well as several less commonly taught languages. For example, there is a language camp for Finnish in Minnesota.

School Resources

Enrollment in full-time studies is not addressed here as an option for learning, although it is obviously primary. Typically, the adult learner cannot set aside other commitments to return full time to school and, thus, must seek less intensive arrangements. Fortunately, "schooling" has become increasingly decentralized, giving more people greater access to classes and school resources. Taking advantage of the rich co-curricular offerings of today's schools begins with a simple phone call to the administrative offices.

Institutions of higher education have expanded so rapidly in the past 40 years that virtually all cities either house a college or university or are near one. In addition, most major universities offer outreach services that are delivered collectively through a continuing education program. Evening classes and special-topic courses are often organized and offered in response to direct requests for services by adult citizens. Also, local school boards frequently offer adult education classes. Finally, even more informal classes are organized by university students and faculty under the rubric of a "free university" or "participatory schooling." These classes are a grass-roots form of continuing education because the content is determined solely by the group's shared learning interests.

The variety of offerings may surprise many who are not actively involved in professional education. The intent and formality of each type of class is loosely exemplified as follows:

> *Regular university course:* "First-Year Spanish." Students must be academically admissible to the university, and must enroll for credit. Classes meet several days per week, one hour per day.
>
> *Continuing education course:* "Spanish for Tourists." Students may or may not enroll for academic credit. Classes meet in the evening, often not in regular university classrooms. Instructors are frequently university faculty members.
>
> *Free university course:* "Latin American Cinema." No academic credit is awarded. A weekly film is followed by a reading. The registration fee covers film rentals. Discussion groups in English or Spanish are led by a knowledgeable person.
>
> *Adult education course:* "ESL for Spanish Speakers." Such a course may be offered by the local school board. No academic credit is offered. The topic is not Spanish; the students, however, are native speakers of Spanish. Classes are usually held in the evening in local public schools or other facilities.

Because course offerings vary each academic term, the former student must make targeted inquiries based on specific personal objectives to determine which courses will best satisfy the desire to use a foreign language and meet native speakers. Semestral catalogues of continuing education and participatory education programs can be requested. Frequently, new courses and locations are established without much publicity; thus, more can be accomplished by telephoning appropriate administrative offices than by perusing newspapers for announcements.

When the desired educational opportunity is not available, former students should let their needs be known by talking to the dean or other administrator involved in curriculum decision-making. Most informal education is implicitly responsive to potential students, who are viewed as "clients." Personal investment in the supply-and-demand process ensures that learning goals will be addressed.

Foreign Students

Any society's greatest wealth is its membership. Foreign students, up to 250,000 annually, enrich American society through their temporary residence in the United States for advanced studies. To provide sociocultural linkages between the schools and the community, most institutions employ an official whose primary responsibility is advising and assisting foreign students. Local residents can benefit greatly from involvement in programs sponsored by foreign students' offices. Typical programs are:

- foreign spouses' organizations;
- international cultural events;
- fairs, bazaars, and dinners;
- specific national groups; and
- "hosting" relationships.

Many foreign students, most of whom are male, arrive with their families (Zikopoulos, 1987). Their wives and children frequently have no direct contacts and are, in effect, homebound. As nonstudents, they experience difficulty becoming socially involved with Americans. The school often tries to help family members through foreign spouses' groups, realizing the important supportive role of the family in the foreign student's education. Classes may be offered that focus on community services, such as medicine, preschools, and transportation. English classes for spouses are commonplace. Foreign student offices welcome volunteers who may help by instructing spouses or providing day-care services for their children--an opportunity for youngsters to be exposed to other children of the world while parents share knowledge and experiences. Former language students should consider volunteering in one or more of these capacities.

Joint planning and personal investments combine to produce successful parties. A celebration with an international flavor brings people together in relaxed social settings and creates speaking opportunities. International Christmas banquets, Chinese New Year's parties, post-Ramadan feasts, and pre-Lenten carnival parties are open to anyone who expresses an interest through the right channel: the foreign student adviser.

To help foreign students maintain and support social contact with members of their own society and culture, many universities sponsor clubs by nationality whenever the numbers of students from a given background warrant it. A Hispanic student association, for example, may have a powerful voice in student politics as well as in social activities. Regular meetings, separate programs of events, and native-language usage are encouraged, as is "associate membership" by interested residents of the community. Again the key person for information about affiliating with national language groups is the foreign student adviser.

National associations often join together to organize international fairs and bazaars. Native crafts, artifacts, and foods are featured at these events, which are open to the public. Through attendance or participation, Americans can make personal contacts with foreigners at such events, where overall success is dependent on social interaction.

Involvement allows the local citizen to gain "immersion time" by engaging in activities in which foreign students are in the majority and, therefore, secure in the use of their native language. Not all groups seek and encourage the participation of local residents; their goal is to be supportive of each other first. However, if membership by local residents is desired, the members solicit the involvement by advertising their meetings.

Language Clubs

Like the high school Spanish Club, an after-school activity that encourages informal learning of the language and culture, adult versions of language clubs have existed for decades, some directly supported by foreign governments. For example, offices of the British Council and Goethe Institutes are found around the world (Koek & Martin, 1987). In many cities, foreign consulates offer educational programs for Americans (U.S. Department of State, 1985). The Alliance Française has scholarly and social aims within the French-speaking community. University modern languages departments should be able to provide information on these clubs because they exist to promote foreign language maintenance and cultural understanding.

Intensive English Programs

More than 250 established intensive English programs (IEPs) in the United States provide full-time instruction in the English language to foreign scholars in preparation for their admission to American schools (Zikopoulos, 1987). Many such programs are housed on university campuses and, by design, are the entry school for many foreigners. In addition to interfacing with a university's international student services, IEPs frequently sponsor their own outreach activities (Jenks, 1980; Sesker & Smith, 1987). Because the students have one urgent mission--to learn English well enough to enter a degree-granting program--they focus their total attention and energy on attaining high English proficiency. This is a major undertaking that necessitates communicative contact with native speakers of English to obtain real-language practice.

These programs are a gold mine of opportunities for shared learning. The need for conversation partners, American informants, and local friends is critical. Volunteers may establish "each-one, teach-one" relationships, whereby help in foreign language skill maintenance for the local resident is provided in exchange for tutoring in conversational English. The initial formality of these arrangements disappears as a friendly association evolves in which daily activities such as shopping or movie-going become the backdrop for communication.

International Weeks

Public schools often sponsor events to coincide with specially designated weeks or months to honor various countries. An International Week or Foreign Language Month offers specially planned activities such as foreign language fairs, cinema festivals, dramatic presentations, and guest speakers.

In one program, IEP students volunteered as participants in the International Day activities of a rural high school. Many planning sessions brought foreign language students and ESL students together to organize a celebration on the theme, "It's a small world." In the class, foreign students planned their lectures, their attire, and their "by-country" participation. The school cafeteria menu included a variety of international dishes; the morning assembly found the auditorium stage alive with native dances from Malaysia, Oman, and Colombia; and flags from many nations were sewn by home economics students. International issues were debated in world history classes. After an after-school barbecue in the local park, there was conversation and a small gift exchange. At dusk, the foreign students' bus departed, leaving behind a throng of waving high school students who, for one day, had had an international experience.

Schools provide many opportunities for cultural and linguistic enrichment through their curricula, continuing education offerings, student service activities, and, most important, their international students. Involvement by interested local parties is rarely discouraged; indeed, it may be urgently needed. Some initiative on the part of the interested seeker of language and cultural interaction may be all that is required to join the international scene.

In-Home Strategies

Closely tied to local schools' programs and populations are numerous organizations seeking "hosting" affiliations for foreign students. The best known of these affiliations is the "host family" arrangement in which a foreign person resides with an American family. There is also a visitational variety of the "hosting" project.

Visitational programs are of short duration, from a few hours to a few weeks. For example, many foreign students are financially unable to return to their homelands during school vacations. Therefore, student service personnel seek the cooperation of American residents in helping international students to escape the solitude of living in an empty dormitory during the winter holidays, for example. In fact, some national proprietary organizations have emerged to serve as "matchmakers" for students and families, such as Christmas International House (address given at the end of this chapter).

An indication of willingness to serve as a host for a one-day holiday, a weekend, or a few weeks will probably yield positive results; an international guest will gratefully accept the invitation. This is a marvelous way to meet someone whose international background matches the former foreign language student's desire for language/cultural learning. A one-day event might easily develop into an ongoing contact, with little risk attached. Again, the sources of information are international student advisers, IEP directors, and local newspapers.

Foreign students in search of a host family are probably seeking a stable household to help them learn about American life and solve minor problems of adjustment to U.S. society. Beyond the scope of the visitation program, the residential arrangement places the foreign student in the host's home on a full-time basis for a predetermined period of time. To live with a foreign housemate is one of the most direct routes to language and cultural interchange. Generally, such arrangements are negotiated and not made randomly or whimsically. After completing applications and "bio" forms, the potential housemates are interviewed by program representatives. Age, sex, language background, transportation, work/study schedules, and the extent of the commitment to cooperative living are discussed before any final commitment is made.

"Live-in" international students are expected to pay rent and/or to perform household services in exchange for lodging, meals, and use of the home's facilities. At the same time, they are expected to develop their own personal and educational interests outside the household. Therefore, the negatives involved in sharing a household may be minimized by careful screening and businesslike negotiations. Prudent planning plus a willingness to be flexible so as to meet new living conditions are the keys to building a positive arrangement for shared living.

In addition to local schools and universities that serve as sources for international housemates, global industries with nearby plants or branch offices, international associations that sponsor student exchange visits (Koek & Martin, 1987), local churches, and local families with ties to friends overseas are often eager to assist in bringing Americans and foreign students together under one roof.

Live-In Problems

There are several predictable problems in hosting an international student. However, outside the potential mismatch of personalities, many problem areas can be approached and minimized in advance.

The first potential problem area concerns *housing facilities.* A live-in guest needs some privacy; a private bathroom and bedroom, a space in the pantry for foodstuffs, a key to the home, and the freedom to stay up late when studying. The host should ensure that all or most of these can be provided.

The second area is *transportation.* Unless the guest owns a car, local ground transportation must be available via public transit or the host family. Getting to and from school, going shopping, and keeping personal appointments require ready access to transportation.

A crucial potential problem area is *communication.* If both parties share some knowledge of the other's language, and both are eager to support communicative equality, a balanced two-way communication habit should develop. For every "American" example offered by the host, the guest should be encouraged to offer comparative/contrastive examples. Too much talk about "how it is in the U.S.A." can stifle both communication and learning. In fact, it is counterproductive to the host's primary learning objective. The guest can gather impressions via all senses, perceiving a new environment *in toto;* the host's input is not from the total environment but, rather through the eyes of the international guest.

The ideal environment is one in which the guest feels free to ask questions without fear of being perceived as ignorant, while the host refrains from lecturing the guest on the obvious. Attentive listening to the questions and comments uncovers the precise information sought. In this process, both parties become aware of the subtle ways in which everyone propagandizes, shares jokes, and swaps stories of blunders, and thus acquire cooperatively gleaned knowledge.

A fourth problem area is *money.* The hosting party must realize that different economic standards prevail in all countries. Consequently, the international student may be subsisting on a low fixed budget. Rent, food, transportation, and personal expenses may consume the guest's monthly allotment, leaving little for travel, social activities, or any frills. If so, the host must be prepared to subsidize some events, such as an outing or a restaurant meal.

Finally, *duration* is a potential issue. A home stay may be of varying length; just how much contact, and for how long, must be decided in advance. It is recommended that a party new to hosting start with a short visit, inviting an international visitor for an evening or weekend. Lengthier periods of residency and greater commitments of time and energy may follow if the experiences have proved to be positive.

Again, keeping a clear objective in mind prevents problem areas from stifling the development of a symbiotic relationship. When the purpose of both parties is to make a close acquaintance through which knowledge and understanding can be mutually acquired, success is more likely than if the parties have independent and incompatible goals. A good in-home experience requires hard work, particularly of the host. Therefore, before embarking on a hosting venture, potential hosts should ask themselves the following questions:

1. Do I have the ability to support my hosting goals with time, space and money?
2. Am I prepared to give and take, respecting my international housemate as an equal partner in the language/cultural endeavor?
3. Can I seek ways to promote this spirit of equality?
4. Have I made this relationship a priority in my leisure activities?
5. Am I ready to ask and to listen?
6. Will I do my "homework," learning more about my guest's background on my own as well as through him or her?
7. Have I verified the reliability of the sponsoring association?
8. Have I enlisted the cooperation of my family and friends?
9. Am I willing to say no or yes to a candidate for an international agreement?
10. Do I accept the fact that international friendships are special, frequently of long duration and ongoing contact?

As with many human undertakings, success is strongly dependent on clarity of forethought. Those who have been successful hosts invariably advise prospective hosts to start with short-term visitations by different guests before entering into a residential agreement with one guest.

The Global Media

The world is virtually at everyone's doorstep, thanks to the global network of telecommunications. International news is available almost instantaneously, and reports of the events are broadcast to every corner of the world. Satellite television permits people to receive programs from far beyond the borders of any one country. Television stations in some U.S. cities offer "simulcasts" in Spanish to subscribers with special decoding equipment. Public television stations broadcast outstanding international productions, such as 1987's "South American Journey," to large audiences of internationally concerned viewers. Radios bring the latest music from many countries into homes and cars.

Libraries, to be considered top-notch, must carry international newspapers and periodicals. Local libraries offer films, audio- and videocassettes, and phonograph records about foreign cultures. Even weekly periodicals highlight foreign countries.

Indeed, a person would have to take definite steps to avoid hearing, seeing, or reading about other countries and their people, because the news media are filled with international information. Motivated viewers find that well-produced television documentaries, for example, bring sights and sounds to them that perhaps would be difficult to receive otherwise. A remote Yukon igloo or an Incan mountain hut is startlingly accessible via the airwaves.

The videocassette recorder (and, of course, the videocamera/recorder) provides the opportunity to see, collect, and edit television programs and videotapes. What was once a one-time broadcast can now be recorded for frequent replay. The VCR makes of the former foreign language student an autonomous teacher/librarian/media specialist, savoring and reviewing internationally oriented programs of personal interest.

Oxford and Crookall (this volume) and Means (this volume) provide in-depth information on multimedia possibilities. In all likelihood, most readers have personally profited from the international treasures available in libraries, on television, on shortwave radio, and on film. Suppose, for example, an American professor accepts an invitation to lecture in Czechoslovakia. He might start by checking out record albums of Czech music and books on Czech language and culture. Then he could request information from his university's Center for Eastern European and Slavic Studies. Next he could rent a videocassette of the movie Amadeus to catch glimpses of the streets of Prague's old town. And, shortly before leaving, thanks to cable television's "weather channel," he could decide whether to pack light or heavy clothing. His total investment for preparatory information would amount to several hours of reading/listening/viewing and the cost of a videocassette rental.

Conclusion

It was once the case that, to learn a foreign language or become well-acquainted with another culture, a person had two major options: to attend language classes full time or to move abroad. Today, both are still primary avenues to these objectives. However, hundreds of alternatives exist, thanks in large measure to a fuller realization within the United States of its cultural and linguistic pluralism, and to technical breakthroughs in global communication. Indeed, much of the world is within reach of Americans' senses and sensibilities as long as they commit themselves to:

- seek ways to travel to and live within the target culture;
- seek ways to become acquainted with members of the target culture who reside in the United States;

- seek opportunities to reside with a foreign visitor or have one reside with them;
- seek out multicultural organizations in the community;
- seek out information from nearby universities, schools, state and local agencies, and civic organizations;
- attend and become involved in international activities, including cultural performances and ethnic events;
- spend time becoming familiar with the library's collections of books, periodicals, recordings, and so on;
- peruse local and cable television programs;
- browse through retail outlets for international books and products; and
- become an involved learner.

To quote an old Chinese proverb, "The longest journey begins with one small step." Living with an international appetite assures that each morsel of knowledge energizes people to seek more language and cultural nourishment. In this lifelong learning journey, the traveler cannot help but encounter many fellow travelers.

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Christmas International House Registration Office, P.O. Box 764, Tucker, GA 30085–0764.

International House, 322 Hawthorne Lane, Charlotte, NC 28204.

YOU *CAN* TAKE IT WITH YOU: Helping Students Maintain Foreign Language Skills Beyond the Classroom Jean Berko Gleason, Editor

Learning a foreign language can take years of study. Unfortunately, despite their best resolutions, students find it difficult to maintain and improve language skills once coursework is complete. Now, the authors of **You *Can* Take It With You** provide a compendium of ideas and resources for maintaining language skills. The book presents a rationale for teaching language skills maintenance through a discussion of language skills attrition, self-instructional strategies and techniques, information about computer assisted instruction, plans for maintaining skills by combining study and travel, the use of cultural resources of American cities and campuses for language maintenance.

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